

Jediism

The Way of the

Force

Compiled and Edited
By
The Anonymous Padawan

Dedicated

To the United Jedi Order (UJA), where I compiled various Jedi Techniques from. To the Jedi Realist Academy (JRA), who, since learning there, used my own knowledge and some of their lessons in this book. To the Forsaken Jedi/Jedi Academy, whose many stories grant wisdom. I would like to thank the Shadow Academy for their perspective. I would like to thank the Force Academy for their Dark Jedi Lectures. And, I would also like to thank JEDI Academy for the lectures on the Force, Trials, Enlightenment, and Poetry
Thank You All.

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The Roots of Jediism

Jediism started in the 60's, when George Lucas went to film school at The University of Southern California Film School. Now at this time, the Star wars saga that spurred jediism into existence had not even been thought of by Lucas. But earlier in his life, Lucas wanted to be a race car driver. He had a horrendous crash, and that is what turned him to film making. If he did not have this crash, he would be a race car driver, star wars would not exist, and neither would jediism. It goes to show, once again, that one small (or huge) thing in a person life can spurn on such great things as Lucas' film career.

Lucas' student work reflected the pop culture obsessions of his youth: 1:42:08, a racing mini-epic, and The Emperor, about a disc jockey named Emperor Hudson, were signature student works, which Lucas would later revisit and build upon in American Graffiti.

After graduating from USC in 1966, Lucas was hired as a teaching assistant assigned to train cameramen for the U.S. Military. It was during this time that Lucas found an opportunity to shoot THX 1138: an abstract science fiction short which went on to win several student awards at USC, and which would later be adapted to the big screen for Lucas' first studio feature. In 1967, Lucas re-enrolled as a USC graduate student. In the same year, he was selected as one of four student filmmakers from the USC film programs to produce a documentary about the making of the film McKenna's Gold. On the strength of his many student awards, and his own perseverance, Lucas won USC's annual scholarship to become a production apprentice at Warner Bros.

In 1973, Lucas sold the script for American Graffiti to Universal Studios for \$700,000, and it was shot in 28 days. The film, which was about teens in 1960's Modesto, was estimated to have grossed over \$50 for each dollar spent on its production, which is a lot of cash. It was also one of the most profitable films released from a major studio, and Lucas became a bona fide director, no longer standing in the shadow of his mentor, Francis Ford Coppola.

This movie would be the basis for the Star Wars series, released four years later. During the four year period that Lucas formed the first movie, he created his own company, Lucasfilm Ltd. He studied ancient mythology, fairytales, and read the book The Hero with a Thousand Faces, to formulate the plot. The plot was based on the concept of the basic myth set forth by Joseph Campbell.

The first three movies, the good ones, as most people would say, are a story of hope, of struggle, and in the end, of victory. These movies were a role model for that generation of people, and it still is for some, even after almost thirty years since the first movie, A New Hope, was released. It became such a moral archetype for the generation of the '70s that it even spawned the religion of jediism, now that truly is an achievement for any film. In the next paragraph the model for the movies is shown.

The first three star wars movies were founded on this basic structure. The diagram for myths and how they were interpreted in star wars, by Joseph Campbell is below:

Movie Archetype

Joseph Campbell	Star Wars
Departure The call to adventure: Refusal of the call: Supernatural aid: Crossing the first threshold: The belly of the whale:	Princess Leia's message Must stay home for harvest Obi-wan rescues Luke from Sandpeople Escaping Tatooine Trash compactor on Death Star
Initiation: The Road of Trials: The meeting with the goddess: Temptation away from the true path: Atonement with the father: Apotheosis: The ultimate boon:	Lightsaber practice Princess Leia Luke is tempted by dark side Anakin and Luke reconcile aboard Death Star Luke becomes a Jedi Knight The Death Star is destroyed
Return: Refusal of the return: The magic flight: Rescue from without: Crossing the return threshold: Master of the two worlds: Freedom to live:	Luke wants to remain on Death Star to Avenge Obi-wan The millennium falcon escaping from the 'Star Han saves Luke from Darth on the Death Star destruction mission. Millennium Falcon destroys pursuing TIE fighters Victory ceremony The Rebellion defeats the Empire
Common Mythic Elements: Two Worlds (mundane and special): The mentor: The oracle: The prophecy: Failed hero: Wearing enemies skin:	Planetside vs. Death Star Obi-wan Kenobi Yoda Luke will defeat the Empire Biggs Luke and Han wear stormtrooper uniform

Shapeshifter (maybe untrustworthy):	Han Solo
Animal familiar:	Chewbacca
Chasing a lone animal into the enchanted wood (and the animal gets away):	The Millennium Falcon follows a lone TIE fighter into range of the Death Star

The first star wars movie, A New Hope, went on to receive awards from the Academy and broke all previous box office records. This movie sparked the world-wide craze for star wars and also the jediism movement.

The world-wide-web was the obvious place to start, and in 1997 Baal Legato created one of the first web sites to lie down the foundations and after several false starts, shutdowns, splits and mergers the Force Academy came into existence in June 1999.

The Jedi Creed, as something completely different, was formed by the impressively named Relan Volkum who laid down the Jedi spiritual and philosophical issues. The even more notably named Mitth'raw'nurida (if you read any star wars novels, you will know this is the name of a faction of blue-skinned, red-eyed humanoids called the Chiss) wrote the actual creed while Streen, one of Mtth'raw'nurida's aspiring pupils tried to keep everything in the right place and in the right order.

The Force was just getting started and in addition to The Creed, Relan Volkum set up his own Jedi United that quickly became the Jedi Organization and Streen turned his altruistic skills towards other equally Jedi-based sites.

Then followed a major setback as the Force showed its mysterious sense of humor. This was the moment when the New Zealand Census (pre-empting the UK Census) gave a great many people the opportunity to answer Jedi to the religious question. And the media could not resist such an easy target, and naturally attacked it with the full power of their ignorance. With no regard for their good intentions and despite all their worthy references and all their colorful names, the followers of the Jedi Religions were no match for the hardened asses of the press and what started as a silly media story on a slow news day left Jedi's arguing and fighting amongst themselves for the next two years. This certainly isn't the Jedi way, now is it? They weren't true forcerers (meaning people of the force, like sorcerers, if you ever listen to The Power of Intention☺)

One unfortunate group to bear the brunt of the attack was The Jedi Creed, who although wisely refusing all media temptations and TV interviews, was still falsely accused of being the 'Official Website' of the Jedi Census.

While the Jedi Creed was still an established site for information and culture the Internet spawned a rash of sites, fanzines came and went and the search for the ultimate unifying force stepped up a gear or two.

Two forces, known as Jedi Realism and The Jedi Religion, came into existence at this time, and had a good year in 2002 when Attack of the Clones came out.

The same man who created The Jedi Creed created a new website aptly named JEDI, which now accepts students who study under the self professed masters and eventually

graduate and print out a degree calling themselves Jedi's. Now we all know that you can't really say you're a Jedi until you have really done the things a Jedi does, but that isn't the point right now is it? The reformed Jedi's raised the Jedi United flag and proclaimed the 21 maxims of Jediism, which sparked an online fervor for the faith. Forums went insane for all things Jedi. There was the Official Code of Jediism to ponder, the True Path of Jedi Knights to follow and the crooked ladder that goes from Apprentices to Masters to climb up or fall down.

The religion itself will not be changed, but it will give the Jedi's online something to debate and comment on. Like Anakin's fall to the dark side, or the meticulous dissection of any new characters to give examples of what to do and what not to do, as well as how the hell Anakin could not sense his damn kids in the force. I mean, come on! He was 'The Chosen One', the strongest creature in the force, and he couldn't sense his kids? I surely hope the movie will explain this.

Historically, Jedi are very similar to the Sohei warriors of Japan, who were monks and fought for their beliefs, much like the Jedi. Here are some of their attributes:

Attributes of the Sohei (Warrior Monk)

in any time, in any place, anywhere the Sohei remembers himself as such

The Sohei is the height of controlled violence and uncontrolled gentleness.

The Sohei does nothing, says nothing, which stems from ego.

The Sohei is the personification of discipline.

The Sohei disciplines himself to be disciplined.

The Sohei has reason for everything he does or says.

The Sohei accepts no excuses for failure.

The Sohei gives no excuses for failure

The Sohei has no time for mediocrity.

The Sohei does not deny fear; he embraces it and uses it.

The Sohei is a protector.

As a protector, the Sohei ceaselessly develops those skills which allow him to protect.

The Sohei seeks perfection of Mind Body and Spirit.

The Sohei is compassion.

The Sohei is the ultimate paradox. The Sohei pursues the arts of peace. The Sohei pursues the arts of war.

The Sohei pursues knowledge.

The Sohei realizes his own shortcomings in all these areas and seeks to correct them.

The Sohei uses discipline to overcome his faults.

The Sohei has time for all things.

The Sohei knows victory and defeat, shuns victory and defeat, so that he will know victory and defeat.

The Sohei is empty. The Sohei is full.

If the Sohei does not know, he seeks until he does.

Nothing is below the Sohei's interest.

Nothing is above the Sohei.

The Sohei seeks truth in that which repels him.

The Sohei loves all things.
The Sohei sees with his ears.
The Sohei listens with his eyes.
The Sohei has great doubt. The Sohei has great faith.
The Sohei knows his emptiness.
The Sohei knows his form.
The Sohei takes his path seriously.
The Sohei laughs at himself.
The Sohei is distinct, separate.
The Sohei is connected to all things.
The Sohei becomes the situation as water takes the shape of its container
The Sohei constantly seeks his own flaws. The Sohei seeks to correct his flaws.
The Sohei recognizes himself as nothing. The Sohei recognizes himself as everything.
The Sohei knows pain. The Sohei knows sadness. The Sohei knows indecision.
The Sohei knows these things within the core of unreasonable happiness.
The Sohei knows it is all a dream. The Sohei doesn't care.

In the next chapter, I will explain what Jediism is, and both perspectives of Jedi Realism and The Jedi Religion, as long as the Jedi ideal.

The Way of the Jedi

The Path of the Jedi

We all have a different path in the force, for all things diverse have their own places...However how we walk those paths is up to us.

The same path for one person can be heaven or hell at one time or another. We recognize this as perception, as our minds interpreting life around us to the specifications that have been built into us by the circumstances and experiences of our lives.

The mind is our conduit between the pure energy of life/spirit/force and our Physical being or vehicle...How the energy travels from the physical to the spiritual and vice versa depends on the condition of the conduit...

If the conduit is completely clear than energy will flow naturally back and forth between realms like water creating an equilibrium.

However if the conduit is blocked the energy will not be allowed to pass naturally and will create problems and deficiencies between the two realms...However life will balance itself out and the force will balance itself out in the form of luck and unguided power, but that energy will never be used for the potential and the power it was intended...It will play out and we will walk away from the experience once again the victims of fate or circumstance.

To clear the conduit we must align all of our perceptions so that they allow the energy of pure potential to flow in and out of the material or "Matrix" realm, "Matrix" meaning mother or womb, where the laws of physics apply directly to the amount and direction of energy in our universe.

The process of aligning perceptions is known as unlearning...We must find the perceptions in our lives that allow us to block the energy...they can be simple things such as "That is impossible" or they can be much more complicated and can be linked to the base perceptions of our personality, similar to the person who believes that some people are capable of doing amazing things however they themselves are not, all of these perceptions are intertwined to one root perception that is often instilled by insecurity with their world...The reason people go on quests of knowledge is not for understanding itself, but because of fear and insecurity with their places in the world...rather than accept where they are (and at the same time accept their inherent power as sentient beings with a spirit) they choose to instead quest for understanding that cannot be obtained...The force is not meant to be understood it is meant to be accepted and used for guidance. However getting someone to change these perceptions will be difficult because they are caused by fear...often times fear is the greatest defense mechanism there is on the planet and it is not

something to be taken lightly when teaching your students...Fear can destroy them. I have seen it many times and those who are destroyed by their fear often times wish to pull others along with them, "Misery loves company". When approaching the process of unlearning if you discover that your student has deep seeded fear you must approach the situation like you would if you were talking someone down off a ledge while they are suicidal...One of the key principles to stick to when doing this is the simple realization that life is not meant to be theorized about it is meant to be lived...

Doubt, Hesitation, Fear of Failure, these are all defense mechanisms created by the intellect...They are designed to make our world rational...

Human beings have developed rational minds and as a side affect of that they have developed the defense mechanisms necessary to keep it a rational world...I.E. the mind tries to reject anything that cannot be explained rationally...therefore it creates blocks that will not allow that irrationality to seep into life.

People have difficult times accepting the irrational, and they have near impossible times accepting the fact that they have that same irrational and unscientific power.

So what we have done is create a "Rats wheel" to keep ourselves from realizing that we have that power, we run in a circle. We never realize that we are in the wheel because we always seem to be gaining ground and going forward...but in actuality the wheel is just spinning. That is akin to us creating blocks and limitations that keep us from being able to use irrational power...much like the illusion that the rat is going forward.

The rat needs to move off of the wheel to go forward...much the same we need to move off of our wheel to go forward...our wheel is our doubt, hesitation, disbelief. Our very need to look before we leap.

Using the force can be looked at as a leap of faith.

If you let go of your fear, your hesitancy and your disbelief than your mind will no longer be blocked...it will be open and free and energy will flow through it in desperately needed equilibrium and balance...Now you have the power that makes a Jedi, the force is with you...

There is energy in all life and all situations, sometimes it is not our purpose to put out energy, either for physical technique or for radiance of emotion...Sometimes it is the job of Jedi to siphon energy out of a situation and back into the spirit realm.

When energy amasses and gathers at a focal point and than intensifies it naturally expands and when energy violently expands it destroys that which is around it.

This is similar to a Riot; much energy gathers and rapidly expand in ever widening violence until they have expanded enough for the energy to have dissipated...

That is when it is our job as Jedi to let the energy flow from the physical realm back into the spirit realm where it is naturally dispersed into the living force.

Our job as Jedi will be ever changing and will always depend on our place with the force...do not become upset if you cannot achieve something you believed to be vital...always remember that in the eyes of the force all is right and nothing can be the "End of the World" that is important to hold on to...whenever all seems out of control pull back and focus on the big picture of the force...we all have our places in it and we must accept that...Our job is to let the light shine into the darkened material realm...To allow life to flourish.

The Virtues of the Jedi

Smarts and Common Sense

The functions of the mind are precious, and not to be taken lightly. A thought can help create, or destroy. It can help fix problems, or bring problems. It can take and it can give. As they say, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste."

Being smart and intelligent, I have found, is simply displaying knowledge in order to gain. Everyone has the ability to know, and everyone knows something, yet if not used in the present situation, it cannot be seen by another. Common sense, though, is using your instincts to apply what you know, or in other words, sensing what is there already and using it. What is the value of common sense?

You can know many things, apply what you know in situations around you, yet if you do not apply your instincts, as a Jedi is supposed to do, and sense for yourself what you realize everyone understands already, you will be trapped. Wisdom is another form of common sense, applying what you know, what you experience, everything you are in order to understand the situation. A wise person has learned, not just through trial and error, yet through experiencing, and knowing, he or she can apply themselves in the best way they can. People who don't understand the wisdom they give to other people may see it as complex, simply because they don't understand it.

A Jedi must be able to sense and use their instincts to apply how they think and what they feel to the situation at hand, and, in return, one will succeed in what one does. Knowledge without wisdom gains nothing. Learn to apply, and understand it.

The Power of Equilibrium

Jedi believe in the power of balance and moderation. They know to avoid extremes which can lead them astray from the path they should go. By being in equilibrium, a Jedi is in control of oneself, as well as the situations around him or her.

Think of it this way. Newton's Second Law of Gravity states, "For every action, there is a reaction." Whenever something is pushed one way, something else is pushed back. But we can also apply this to our emotional lives. When you get very happy, it is normal to get very sad later on. It is simply your body balancing yourself as it should.

When a Jedi does something wrong, or breaks a vow or oath, it can be devastating. Yet this doesn't mean you are evil. You are as human as anyone else, don't take it so hard. Even though, a Jedi should always be accountable for his or her actions, accept responsibility and admit the flaws he or she has committed. It is simply a process of balance of what you are experiencing. When it happens again, be aware of it and maintain your stability...yet accept your wrong doings as a lesson and tool to be a better person.

You see, every Jedi must focus on change and accept change. Without change, our desires and motivations stand still, and seldom takes off again. By changing yourself and reconstructing yourself, relearning what has been learned, you can accomplish more.

Equilibrium is like a weight scale. When you work, don't forget to play. When you are quiet, don't forget to speak up when you are able to. When you are so busy reading and writing, take time to exercise and go for a walk. By understanding how nature works, and how equilibrium is a reoccurring thing, you can prepare yourself for changes and experiences to come.

Be Exact

Things and situations in your life may not be illustrated as perfect, yet it is. Things are as they are supposed to be for the moment. Situations happened exactly as it should of happened. Sure, it may seem to you it could have worked out better or could have been more like this than like that, but it's over. Accept it and move on.

In real life, things can seem complicated. Complication is the view of seeing things which you cannot understand the guidelines for. Math may seem complicated to you because you may not have practiced it enough, or took the time to like it or learned all the rules to use it properly. All things are as simple as you make it. If you are having a hard time striving to be a Jedi and following the rules of the order, look to the Force for guidance. You see, the Force will never ask you to do something you can't do. It may seem like you can't do it, yet you can. You need to believe in yourself and not give in to your doubts.

As you become more rounded, you will see things as very simple - all you really had to do was learn and experience in order to understand these simple things. Perfection is realizing the full potential of a thing. The Force knows the full potential of all things, therefore is perfect, and all things it exist in are as perfect as they make themselves.

Be exact. Don't cheat yourself. Take advice when it is given to you, study math until you find out how easy it could be for you. The Jedi path is a hard path, but with practice, with

understanding, with learning and with experience, it will get easier and become as instinct. You can be perfect. Things can be simple. Act by acting with precision.

Patience as a Two-Edged Blade

It is wise to be patient. A Jedi must practice patience in order to achieve the will of the Force. Without being patient, one cannot fully acquire knowledge or experience knowledge. Patience is a crucial virtue of a Jedi which cannot be ignored nor forgotten.

In the meantime, one can be overly patient, or use it as an excuse not to do something at the present moment. There are many who have probably said to you something like, "I'll get to it. Just be patient!" And then you find later on they forget or keep saying it to get out of their responsibility. A Jedi must be responsible for his or her actions, or one isn't taken seriously or never asked to provide services which require responsibility. Therefore, we must know when patience is used as a virtue and when it is used as an excuse.

When an opportunity comes which you find will accomplish your goals, take it, don't wait on it or expect it to come again because it may never happen again. If you see yourself waiting and waiting for no reason, just to not give in to a certain responsibility, stop what you are doing and get it done.

It is very simple to understand the value of patience, as well as realizing the extremes. Be patient when you need to be, be active when you need to be. If you follow and listen to the will of the Force, you will know the difference, and the fine line will be drawn out for you. Trust in the Force, and it will show you what you need to do.

The Walking Dictionary

How to say a word. How to spell a word. How to use a word. How to understand a word.

What more do you want.

We find that this book is very easy to find, actually very inexpensive, and basically easy to comprehend, all in the reach of your fingertips. There is also the encyclopedia, the language translation books, and the thesaurus, filled with so much knowledge that we literally take it for granted. Imagine someone a thousand years ago with a simple dictionary we have today, a collection of all the words you can always look up and understand it's meaning. Could it have prevented wars...could it have given peace? Would life have been different...for better or for worse?

A simple book, with a universal meaning. A book containing words, definitions and usages. Can determine our next grade in class, can show someone happiness, can give hope to others, as well as tear us down into nothingness. The power of words has stuck us all.

Don't be afraid to look at these books. Understand and learn something. Enlighten the universe you exist in.

A mountain of knowledge...don't let it intimidate you.

What is Jediism?

Basically, Jediism is a belief based on Taoist ethics, the code of chivalry, and bushido (the way of the warrior). Some say it is based solely on the Lucas movies. Others believe it started over 5,000 years ago, and that it became whole when the Lucas movies came out. Whatever you believe, the ideal still remains the same.

Jedi Religion

For an individual in the Jedi Religion camp, to become a real Jedi and work his or her way along The True Path, much help is provided by websites, books and clubs who have made the time and exerted the effort to get a grasp on what the twenty one maxims of the code of Jediism truly mean, just for your viewing pleasure.

These are the usual mix of benevolent one-word bombshells like Loyalty, Courage and Harmony (some of the characteristics seen by Obi-wan and Luke in the movies) and when understood, points the way towards the goal of spiritual peace, calmness and resolution.

And having chosen to follow the path, the result is the sort of inner peace that comes from believing that something, somewhere really cares about each individual, which is taught in most Abrahamic beliefs, like Christianity and Judaism (yes, I WAS a Jew once). It asserts that the Force really is with you.

And after a period of email study, a couple of key strokes can print out a certificate of allegiance to the cause which (by filling in the blanks) ensures the recipient will 'Defend the Light, Uphold the Maxims' and for ever more can be called a Jedi Knight. Somewhat further along The Light Path, the Jedi Religion offers a theology and philosophy showing The Force as the way to God (or goddess for those feminists out there).

The Force, they say, is something that binds everything together. Not just every religion and every theology, this is The Force That Connects Everything. And they do mean everything. Pretty much they're saying the Force IS.

It is responsible for the really big stuff like the creation of the universe and for the really important stuff like maintaining a healthy balance between opposing human traits, the basic concept of yin and yang.

The Force itself, they say, is neither good nor bad. It may have a light side, a dark side and even a shadowy side (there is a website devoted to shadow Jedi's, who are pretty much following the middle way. Not that's its completely relevant, but if you played Knights of the Old Republic, you should remember that Jolee Bindo was a gray/shadow Jedi, as well as being a grumpy old man), but goodness and badness come from people and only people can choose which path to follow.

And for those on The Religious Path it is good to know that the all pervading force surrounding us is nothing other than God's Will and although God still allows us the freedom of choice, the best choice would be (they say) to follow the path to where the force originates and such.

Jedi Realism

Jedi realism is a fairly simple philosophy, and, true to its name, doesn't have outlandish and crazy beliefs that are so common in religion. It is about realism, and it takes lessons from the first movies, and applying them to daily life. It also teaches most of the basic tenets of all types of Jedi's; compassion, pacifism, selflessness, fearlessness, courage, among other things.

The Jedi Ideal

Besides the two groups, The Jedi Religion and Jedi realism, there are two main beliefs that divide the Jedi's. One, that Jediism started over 5,000 years ago in ancient religions, and that over the years it ripened and finally came to fruition in the star wars series, which spurred its completion. The other belief is that Jediism has no ancient ties, that it only came into being when Lucas fathomed it. The latter belief needs no explanation, because it is purely simplistic. The former, however, begs one.

The Jedi's who follow the first ideal believe it has roots in Taoism, the warrior Code of Bushido, and was developed, over time, by and within many cultures. It is also based on the European knight's ideal of chivalry, and combined many aspects from other religions. The common phrase in the star wars universe, "may the force be with you", is based on the Christian saying, "May the Lord be with you", and the awesome powers believed wielded by true force users can also be based on powers Jesus and the forcerers of olden day Asia used, like stories of Taoist immortals and the basic concept of Qi, or the life force, which can be used in ways akin to the Force. I will explain the concepts of Taoist ethics, bushido, chivalry, and Zen Buddhism below.

Taoist Ethics

Taoist ethics can be defined as selflessness, moderation, embracing the mystery, non-contrivance, detachment, and humility.

Selflessness can be described as a redefinition of "self" or "ego." The Taoists believe that the way we try to stand outside our being in the attempt of self-observation is the source of most of our unhappiness and loneliness, simply because in order to observe as such, we must see our "self" as separate from other "selves." This creates many unnecessary and troublesome illusions, and is based on an untrue assumption: those organisms are mutually exclusive. Since we think we are unique, we try to be that way, and it creates the illusion that we have to be unique and that if we are not we are doing something wrong. It is not good for peace.

Moderation can be defined as transcending limitation. Everywhere, and every day, we have limits. How far we can jump, how much we can eat, how fast I can type these words. We cannot rid ourselves of these limitations, because it is logically impossible. Nothing can stop the force of gravity, and nothing ever will. Limitations are imposed on us from many fronts; our parents, our school, our job, and our nation. The notion of unbridled

freedom is implausible. We may be able to choose which laws to abide by, but the consequences will most likely come back to bite us in the ass. True freedom lies in the recognition of our limitations. If we recognize how far we can go, we have unlimited freedom within that space. The true sage lives between the upper bound and the lower bound, or in other words, moderation, or the middle way as in Buddhism.

Embracing the mystery can be defined as embracing all things mysterious that we may sometimes fear. Fear is an inherent emotion within a creature. We cannot escape it, only control it. It is what allows the "fight or flight" response. By being afraid, we keep ourselves away from danger, safe and sound we must be. However, by humbling ourselves with the knowledge that we are a part of nature, not a unique organism, like what is taught in the ethic of selflessness, we know that you have to rely on nature for your needs. Not everything can be "out to get you," and, in fact, most of our fear reactions are overreactions (like homophobes, they really overreact).

Despite all we know of nature, through biology and art and living, there are still many things which we don't know. How could we know anything more than what we see? We only have a brain a few cubic centimeters in volume. The truth is, we've stored only those things which help us to survive in nature, with perhaps a few added goodies like the knowledge of computers and how to make a soufflé (aka useless stuff) which enable us with the potential to enjoy a happy life and pursue our own dreams and aspirations. Live the American dream people.

But what of all the things we don't know? That's what religion is for. To tell all the people that we were created in God's image, but then we got knowledgeable and took hold of the earth. Or that we are all spawned and interconnected by the all powerful Force. Or, we sprung from the Tao, and that we are not how we should be, living in harmony with machines instead of nature. Well, despite what we may claim is true or not true, despite all our opinions and biases, beliefs and disbeliefs, the Universe is still a great mystery to us all, and much of life is taken up with coping with this mystery. Living life in an environment which you know nothing about, any wonder that we're so scared! But Taoists take a different approach. Taoists *embrace* the mystery. They enjoy every confusion and misunderstanding and mysterious thing they see, because to them, life is a game, and games, as you know, aren't fun without both the possibility of winning and the equal possibility of losing. Mystery is what makes games fun, and to Taoists, mystery is what makes life fun.

Non-contrivance is defined as no contrived or highly defined morals that some preacher tells you to believe or you're going to hell. Because nature is dynamic, and contrived morals are stiff, contrived morals go against nature. Furthermore, the purpose for these morals is usually not better living, but greater control, either for yourself or for others. Like the stiff morals of the Church in Medieval times. It was either their way, or the outlandishly designed heathen-killing machine. There was no freedom, and their contrived morals brought the peasants against them. By dictating your morals, other people feel a sense of control over your life, and it's no different just because you dictate your own morals. The bottom line is that whether you're living better or not has no bearing on morality, only if you're *more controlled*. Nature is not something that can be controlled; it controls itself. Anytime someone has ever tried to control nature, it has rebelled. It is like a mustang, always wild and untamed. You needn't impose your control on it, or let others impose their control on you.

If you want to be a great leader, you must learn to follow the Tao. Stop trying to control. Let go of fixed plans and concepts, and the world will govern itself. The more prohibitions you have, the less virtuous people will be. The more weapons you have, the less secure people will be. The more subsidies you have, the less self-reliant people will be. Therefore the Master says: I let go of the law, and people become honest. I let go of economics, and people become prosperous. I let go of religion, and people become serene. I let go of all desire for the common good, and the good becomes common as grass.

Chapter 57 of the Tao Te Ching.

Detachment is described by not being attached to anything. Be it life, ego, or that really tasty chocolate candy bar that widens your waist, Taoists think it is better to not be attached. The Tao Te Ching teaches that learning is a part of life, but what you learn doesn't belong to you. To attach to your learning as your own, strutting your stuff and trying to scare people with your big concepts, or to even think that your knowledge is all that important, is to misunderstand the knowledge. In such a game, knowledge becomes a prize, and ignorance is the enemy. Knowledge belongs to all, and anyone who thinks otherwise probably has a very large ego.

The Tao Te Ching teaches that life and death are cycles of nature. One day something is allowed to live, the next day it dies. One thing lives at the expense of another, and this creates a chain of dependence of one species upon another. This is neither bad nor good, it just is. The goal of all species is to survive, but only as a part of the living/dying game. To attach to life and fear death is to misunderstand life. Life is a cycle, not a grand victory or grand loss. To not accept the ultimate truth that you will eventually die is ignorance, and it brings fear to your life. Living in constant fear of death is a terrible thing.

In the most general sense, all of these can be summed up as the battle between having and not having, being and not being, existing and not existing. The frantic struggle to control and possess more and more *things* (being, or manifestation), like in the west, where more things and more money and more power means the world to many people, and eliminate lack, misfortune and emptiness (non-being). The struggle, of course, is what makes life fun, but without the thing to be struggled against, there is no struggle. Therefore, the Tao Te Ching teaches to honor the enemy, to humble yourself in knowing that you'll never *win*, but that doesn't mean to quit playing, it just means to play with honor and fairness. To use the game analogy, it means to not pull a 'Dirty Harry' on your opponent in the middle of a monopoly game by taking out a magnum.

Humility can be defined as the quality or condition of being humble. The ego is pretty much what controls this. If you have a huge, over-inflated ego like napoleon or Qin Shihuangdi, strutting your stuff everywhere and thinking you are better than others, this is the antithesis of selflessness. If you are humble however, you are not detached from the world like people of large egos, but are a part of nature. To do something without caring anything about the outcome, good or bad, and accepting it either way. Where as napoleon would whine and scream and bitch if he lost a major battle, the humble person would take the outcome with grace.

"Congratulations! You just won! What are you going to do now? ... I'm going to Disneyland." This is a classic Disneyland commercial that most people have heard before. If you ever watch the World Series, the team will always say, in a sweat soaked, tired scream, that they're going to Disney land and never coming back. You know, whenever

someone does something outstanding, they're going to have that "what are you going to do next" moment, and they would reply that they're going to Disneyland (in my case it would be Seaworld, but that's just me)

The proper question is, what else is there to do? No one is going to play trumpets for you and have the whole world bow. You'll get a bit of recognition no matter what you succeed at, but you can't expect too much. Disneyland happened to believe the best thing for someone to do once they've succeeded at something is to go to Disneyland. Lao Tzu would agree.

Humility means doing your job with detachment from the outcome. It means to commit yourself from moment to moment, all that it takes. Success happens every moment you do this; it's not something that only happens when you have no more to do. Actually, that's the time that you've stopped succeeding, and, of course, the time to go to Disneyland.

Bushido

Bushido comes out of Buddhism, Zen, Confucianism, and Shintoism. The combination of these schools of thought and religions has formed the code of warrior values known as Bushido.

From Buddhism, Bushido gets its relationship to danger and death. The samurai do not fear death because they believe as Buddhism teaches, after death one will be reincarnated and may live another life here on earth. The samurai are warriors from the time they become samurai until their death; they have no fear of danger. Through Zen, a school of Buddhism one can reach the ultimate "Absolute." Zen meditation teaches one to focus and reach a level of thought words cannot describe. Zen teaches one to "know thyself" and do not to limit yourself. Samurai used this as a tool to drive out fear, unsteadiness and ultimately mistakes. These things could get him killed.

Shintoism, another Japanese doctrine, gives Bushido its loyalty and patriotism. Shintoism includes ancestor-worship which makes the Imperial family the fountain-head of the whole nation. It awards the emperor a god-like reverence. He is the embodiment of Heaven on earth. With such loyalty, the samurai pledge themselves to the emperor and their daimyo or feudal landlords, higher ranking samurai. Shintoism also provides the backbone for patriotism to their country, Japan. They believe the land is not merely there for their needs, "it is the sacred abode to the gods, the spirits of their forefathers . . ." (Nitobe, 14). The land is cared for, protected and nurtured through an intense patriotism.

Confucianism gives Bushido its beliefs in relationships with the human world, their environment and family. Confucianism's stress on the five moral relations between master and servant, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brother, and friend and friend, are what the samurai follow. However, the samurai disagreed strongly with many of the writings of Confucius. They believed that man should not sit and read books all day, nor shall he write poems all day, for an intellectual specialist was considered to be a machine. Instead, Bushido believes man and the universe were made to be alike in both the spirit and ethics.

Along with these virtues, Bushido also holds justice, benevolence, love, sincerity, honesty, and self-control in utmost respect. Justice is one of the main factors in the code of the samurai. Crooked ways and unjust actions are thought to be lowly and inhumane. Love and benevolence were supreme virtues and princely acts. Samurai followed a specific etiquette in every day life as well as in war. Sincerity and honesty were as valued as their lives. Bushi no ichi-gon, or "the word of a samurai," transcends a pact of complete faithfulness and trust. With such pacts there was no need for a written pledge; it was thought beneath one's dignity. The samurai also needed self-control and stoicism to be fully honored. He showed no sign of pain or joy. He endured all within--no groans, no crying. He held a calmness of behavior and composure of the mind neither of which should be bothered by passion of any kind. He was a true and complete warrior. These factors which make up Bushido were few and simple. Though simple, Bushido created a way of life that was to nourish a nation through its most troubling times, through civil wars, despair and uncertainty. "The wholesome unsophisticated nature of our warrior ancestors derived ample food for their spirit from a sheaf of commonplace and fragmentary teachings, gleaned as it were on the highways and byways of ancient thought, and, stimulated by the demands of the age formed from these gleanings a new and unique way of life" (Nitobe, 20).

Chivalry

Prowess: To seek excellence in all endeavors expected of a knight, martial and otherwise, seeking strength to be used in the service of justice, rather than in personal aggrandizement.

Justice: Seek always the path of 'right', unencumbered by bias or personal interest. Recognize that the sword of justice can be a terrible thing, so it must be tempered by humanity and mercy. If the 'right' you see rings agrees with others, and you seek it out without bending to the temptation for expediency, then you will earn renown beyond measure.

Loyalty: Be known for unwavering commitment to the people and ideals you choose to live by. There are many places where compromise is expected; loyalty is not amongst them.

Defense: The ideal knight was sworn by oath to defend his liege lord and those who depended upon him. Seek always to defend your nation, your family, and those to whom you believe worthy of loyalty.

Courage: Being a knight often means choosing the more difficult path, the personally expensive one. Be prepared to make personal sacrifices in service of the precepts and people you value. At the same time, a knight should seek wisdom to see that stupidity and

courage are cousins. Courage also means taking the side of truth in all matters, rather than seeking the expedient lie. Seek the truth whenever possible, but remember to temper justice with mercy, or the pure truth can bring grief.

Faith: A knight must have faith in his beliefs, for faith roots him and gives hope against the despair that human failings create.

Humility: Value first the contributions of others; do not boast of your own accomplishments, let others do this for you. Tell the deeds of others before your own, according them the renown rightfully earned through virtuous deeds. In this way the office of knighthood is well done and glorified, helping not only the gentle spoken of but also all who call themselves knights.

Largesse: Be generous in so far as your resources allow; largesse used in this way counters gluttony. It also makes the path of mercy easier to discern when a difficult decision of justice is required.

Nobility: Seek great stature of character by holding to the virtues and duties of a knight, realizing that though the ideals cannot be reached, the quality of striving towards them ennoble the spirit, growing the character from dust towards the heavens. Nobility also has the tendency to influence others, offering a compelling example of what can be done in the service of rightness.

Franchise: Seek to emulate everything I have spoken of as sincerely as possible, not for the reason of personal gain but because it is right. Do not restrict your exploration to a small world, but seek to infuse every aspect of your life with these qualities. Should you succeed in even a tiny measure then you will be well remembered for your quality and virtue.

The Jedi Code

There is no emotion. There is peace.
There is no ignorance. There is knowledge.
There is no passion. There is serenity.
There is no chaos. There is harmony.
There is no death. There is the force.

This is the five-stanza Jedi code, in its simplest form. Easily learned, but just as easily misunderstood, it is. I will attempt to explain it to you from my own point of view, but the code is a koan. Most people probably don't know what a koan is, so I will explain it. A koan is a question a Zen master asks a student. No one answer is correct, because each student has their own. The master knows when the student gets the right answer. Since the Jedi Code is what you make of it, I will only give you my explanation.

"There is no emotion. There is peace."

This stanza symbolizes a Jedi letting go of the constraints of emotion, and attaining peace. Now, we all know that the average Joe like you or me is not going to be able to do this without a lot of exertion. Jedi are almost never allowed to have emotional attachments, and that is why they can control their emotions so effectively. This is why a light Jedi will always best a dark Jedi if they have the same amount of skills because his emotions do not affect him/her. With emotions, the Jedi is held back from focus and peace because the emotions cloud his/her judgment and ultimately lead to the dark side, if they reign unchecked. Too much emotion is dangerous, but too little is inhuman. Yet again, the middle way of Buddhism manifests itself within Jediism.

A main teaching within the Jedi Order is to control emotion to achieve perfect peace and harmony between mind, body and spirit. That is one reason Jedi are never allowed to have children or emotional attachments to others, like a wife, husband, or child. They were also separated at birth from parents so they would have no emotional ties whatsoever. If there were no restraining emotions, peace was easier to attain.

In the final star wars movie, Return of the Jedi, Luke loses control when he hears Vader talk about turning Leia to darkness. In that brief amount of time, Luke falls to his passions and emotions, anger and hate consume him, and he hacks off his father's hand. Realizing what he has done, he throws his lightsaber aside, and reigns in his emotions. On another perspective, however, the attack can be seen as a pre-emptive strike to protect his sister from the evil clutches of Darth Vader and Darth Sidious. It all depends on your perspective, however.

Peace is ultimately achieved when you rule over your emotions, not the other way around. Yet another example of peace in the movies is Obi-wan. In all of the movies where Obi-wan is an old man, he never loses control of his emotions and always attacks only in defense of another, like at the Mos Eisley cantina. Even though Obi-wan would probably love to see the death of Vader for the greater good of the galaxy, he does not kill him in the final fight between them to show Luke, and Vader, a lesson. That peace and love defeat all. The example of Vader's emancipation when Luke calls for help whilst being

attacked by Sidious is proof of this. Luke's undying love and compassion for his darkened father, even though he was being tortured, let the inner goodness within Vader spring forth, and he saved his son and redeemed his soul in the final act of self-sacrifice, when he forfeit his own life to preserve his son's.

A different example of control over emotions is in Episode II, Attack of the Clones, when Padme Amidala is thrown off a troop carrier onto the sands of Geonosis. Logically, Anakin wants to help Padme because he cares for her, a natural reaction when in the grip of love. Anakin had always had a feeble grip on his emotions, and his grip faltered at this time. One of the reasons he fell into darkness.

However, Obi-wan held his emotions in check, and abandoned Padme for the greater good. Obi-wan and Anakin both knew if Dooku escaped Geonosis, many bad things would happen to the galaxy, and it was later revealed he carried plans for the Death Star. Even though Obi-wan cared for Padme, and she was in his protection, he abandoned her to protect the galaxy. She turned out to live.

Through all of Luke's training and impatience, Obi-wan exuded only peace, love, and patience, as did Yoda when training young Luke (except for the natural grumpiness of an 800 year old dwarf that is). Both Jedi masters held a firm grip on their emotions, and attained peace and wisdom.

Unbridled emotion and passions are said, by those of darkness, to lead to power. But at what cost for this power you supposedly attain through anger and hate? No matter how much power courses through your veins because of your rage and malice, it will inevitably destroy you in the end.

In every Star Wars novel or movie with the Sith in it, there will always be a time of immense power and considerable tyranny. The Sith, for a time, controlled the galaxy and ruled everyone with an iron fist, who were in turn ruled over by ruthless and evil Sith Lords. They had so much power, but were afraid of the other Sith Lords that they ruled with, so they tore each other apart, and in turn destroying their own empires. Through all of their negative emotions and evil, they undid themselves completely and utterly. An alliance in darkness is a fragile alliance, at best.

There are many emotions, some damaging, some very damaging, and there are very good ones as well. Happiness, compassion, love. These are emotions of the light side of the force, ones that will help, not destroy you. Anger, hate, despair, of the dark side, are they. These damaging emotions will hurt you in different ways, which I will explain below.

Anger, a very common, and equally bad, emotion. Every day, you will probably experience some type of anger, whether it be in annoyance at a fly pestering your face, or the anger of your boyfriend/girlfriend breaking up with you. Anger will come in small or large packages, but it is, and always will be, a negative emotion.

Anger is sometimes very hard to deal with. My father, when I was still a fetus, abandons my mother for another woman. That is very selfish, abandoning a baby child, your baby child, because you don't like the mother that much. You still have the obligation of taking care of the child which you created.

After I became fully aware of the situation, I was considerably angry that my father abandoned me, and on top of that, I had to visit him when he lived with the woman he

abandoned my mother for. It was never pleasant, and I really hated the woman. I visualized myself beating her up for what she did. I was disgusted just to be around her, and I hardly tolerated her presence, however I kept up a false pretense of cordialness. Eventually, around the age of 12, I completely renounced my anger and inwardly forgave them for what they had done. But that didn't mean I would let her off the hook. Anger, as I have shown, is a hard emotion to keep up and a hard emotion to get rid of, kind of like drugs, but without any pleasure. It twists you up inside and makes you feel miserable, and wanting to rain pain and suffering on the cause of your anger.

Hate, I believe, is a different form of anger. But worse. Instead of just being plain angry, you are angry and want to destroy what you are angry at. It, as well as anger, will twist you up inside, eating away your former self until you are just a hateful, evil monster. A mockery of what you once were.

As I stated in my above example of anger, I hated my father and his new wife for the hardships they bestowed on my mother, brother, and I. But really, what good will hate do anyway? You can't act upon what the hate worm inside of you yearns for you to do, and all it does is make you angrier. This emotion is one of the worst of all emotions.

Fear. Fear is a terrible thing to feel. Fear manifests itself everywhere, whether it be the fear of losing a loved one, as Anakin had, the fear of what people will think of you, or the fear of death. Fear is everywhere, and it is as beneficial as it is bad.

Fear is sometimes what keeps people and other living beings alive. If you fear going out in the dark because beasts lurk there, it is in the safety of you and your own life. If you fear swimming in the middle of the ocean because sharks are in it, then it is a beneficial fear. If you fear fighting someone because you might hurt them or vice versa, then it, too, is a beneficial fear.

But sometimes fear is what makes us do terrible things. Say, if someone threatens your life if you don't kill someone, you might do it, because you don't want to die. If, like Anakin Skywalker, you fear the loss of your love, you will do everything in your power to stop it. After his dreams of Padme dying a horrible, painful death on an alien world, he searched everywhere to find the power to save her. Eventually, it became more about power than about Padme, and he slaughtered the Jedi, and, even though he loved her so, ended up killing Padme himself. His fear of loss was his downfall, and the downfall of the Republic, the downfall of liberty, and the downfall of the Jedi.

Gandhi is a very good example of peace. Even though there were only a little over 100,000 British soldiers in India, and there were almost a billion Indians, Gandhi still did not take a violent stand. He knew that if he did not take a peaceful stand, many Indians would die, and even if they did overthrow all of the British, the Brits would come back in force and kill off many more people. Instead of a violent stand like most people would take, he took a peaceful one, and this peace paid off with the freedom of India from the British brutes. Even though he could have effortlessly rallied the people and massacred the British, he did not, because peace will always prevail in the end.

In this day and age, the hectic lifestyle of most people prevents them from attaining peace. Most working people are under some amount of stress, whether it be a small amount or a huge, almost unbearable amount of stress. Stress is a very damaging emotion, and some

people become depressed or even commit suicide because they are under so much stress and pressure. There is almost no time for meditation or peaceful relaxation. Only work, work and even more work.

The good news is that we are slowly, but surely, easing out of this damaging lifestyle and turning to a more peaceful, relaxed one. There are many ads on the television about vacation and happiness, and there are an increasing number of people who practice yoga and meditation. There are books, movies, and other forms of media in this country and others that will help you along the path to peace.

There's this great story I know, I first heard it on the Power of Intention by Wayne Dyer, and it's about peace.

There were two prime ministers, who were talking about politics in a private room. Suddenly, a man burst into the room, and started pounding his fists against the wall and banging things to the ground.

The resident prime minister said, "Arnold, please kindly remember rule number 6". Arnold instantly regained his composure, apologized, gave a bow and left the room. Twenty minutes later, another person burst into the room in a hysterical rage, hitting things and scattering papers across the space.

The resident prime minister again said, "Marcia, please remember rule number 6". Marcia, just like the man before her, instantly regained her composure, curtsied, and politely left the room. Again, the prime ministers resumed their discussion.

When a similar incident happened yet a third time, the visiting prime minister asked, "good friend, I have seen many things in my life, but never have I seen such a thing as your rule number 6. Could you please tell me what rule number 6 means?"

The resident prime minister replied, "Don't take yourself so god damn seriously!" "Ah." Said the guest prime minister and he pondered it for a moment before asking, "What are the other rules?"

The other minister said, "Oh, there aren't any".

Wayne Dyer later went to go on that when he felt stressed and worried greatly over getting to a certain place or doing a certain thing in time, he reminded himself of rule number 6, and calm instantly descended on him. He also said he called upon rule number 6 numerous times in the day, and every time he calmed down and peace descended on him. It goes to show you that just a few words can create calmness for anyone.

To truly understand emotion, we must look at its source.

Many people get very angry and exude great negative emotion about such trivial things as a mess on the floor. I have seen people scream, shout, cry, and bitch just about a mess in the house. We don't really have anything to be angry about with such small things, but we are anyway.

Why is this? Is it because we can, because we live in this country where we can be whatever we want to be, and not be reprimanded? Or is it because we are like Anakin, with no emotional grasp on our lives?

I would go for the latter. But we just can look at the surface emotions, and know there are others beneath. Some people are under so much stress and pressure they will explode at such small things. There is always a source below the source. An emotion under an emotion.

The surface emotions probably are a façade of what is really there. Great hurt. Very great hurt. The surface emotions serve to push away this great hurt, to keep it off your thoughts so that you can focus on the now instead of the before. Or the hurt is so great you make yourself into what you are now with emotions that are not your own.

A good example with this is my brother. When he was six, my father left my mother for the very first time. I wasn't born until my brother was 8, but the story says that my brother put a rubber band on the door handle to keep my dad from leaving. He later took the dad-summoning ritual from the movie, 'Secret Garden', and used that to try to bring him back. It apparently worked, and he came back some time later, whereupon I was born. He then left again.

My brother eventually got used to it, and he was no longer bothered by his father's absence. When he entered high school, however, bad things started to happen. My dad had a heart attack right in front of my brother, and almost died. It traumatized him so much, that he warped himself into a mockery of what he once was. This was not just because of his father, it was because of his friend, who I will be calling bobby ray (not real name...).

My brother met bobby ray in high school, and he was slowly manipulated into systematically dumping all his friends in favor for his one friend, bobby ray, who was rich (we were not so rich), and satisfied my brothers needs for luxury. Step by step, he was turned from a cool big brother who listened to rock music and set a good example, to a boring intellectual who read Proust and Voltaire, listened solely to classical music, and became a racist, constantly commenting on how other minorities who are not of white decent should be banned from the TV. I miss the good old days when Adam Sandler would sing crappy, obscene ballads to the tune of an acoustic guitar, and my brother would listen and hum. Sigh...

But the point is, my brother destroyed himself to bury his pain in darkside emotions, and now he is a nobody. He still hides the pain behind his well-constructed web of intrigue and emotion, but you can still see it in his eyes.

An emotion like stress is a huge factor in many physic traumas.

Stress is, a lot of the time, a factor in many people's emotional outbursts, failings, etc. Stress can drive someone to anger at family members, co-workers, friends, your pet goldfish... everything. Many people not only become angry, but depressed because of stress.

Lets say someone was trying very hard to get into Harvard. This person worked day and night, meticulously looked over homework for errors, never missed a day of school, and always did a good job on tests. In short, working really, really hard, and under a lot of stress to succeed and get in.

And then they don't get in, they fail some trumped up test or review, and are not accepted. Think of how this person would feel like. Many dark side emotions would swirl around in a maelstrom of anger, surprise (not darkside, mind you), sadness. Then, once these emotions start to fade, they become depressed, and after all that hard work, did not feel like working anymore. Then, later on, committed suicide in one way or another because they no longer felt like living

“There is no Ignorance. There is Knowledge.”

Ignorance can be defined as unawareness, obliviousness, unfamiliarity, unconsciousness, benightedness, inexperience, greenness, innocence, simplicity, and naïveté. Knowledge is defined as being knowing, familiarity, awareness, apprehension, cognition, grasp, understanding, discernment, consciousness, conception, or insight.

Ignorance is the complete antithesis of knowledge, and so a Jedi must have insight and experience, not inexperience, or else he/she will fail. If you think about it, trying to do something when you are completely ignorant of what you are doing is like a paper dog chasing an asbestos cat through hell. It just doesn't work. It has always shown that if someone has ignorance of something they will always be unsuccessful. An example of this in the Star Wars universe is the empire underestimating the Rebellion.

The Empire thought that the Rebellion was just a localized threat, and that it could be easily dealt with. They sorely underestimated the resolve of the Rebellion, as their prized possession, the Death Star, was destroyed not just once by the rebels, but twice. Such ignorance of the enemy was the Empire's downfall, and they were destroyed.

Another example in the SW universe is the final battle between Luke and Vader.

Emperor Palpatine is extremely sure that he can make Luke fall, as he did with Luke's father. He constantly throws temptation after temptation and insult after insult at Luke to try to make him fall, or to make Luke attack him. He finally struck a chord within Luke when he talked about the killing of his friends, and Luke instantly took his lightsaber and commenced a battle with Vader. Thinking he had succeeded, he watched the fight, but to his horror, Luke threw away his saber after he incapacitated his father. The Emperor's ignorance of Luke's persona is what led Luke to abandon the attack, as the light was so infused in him.

The Emperor also deeply underestimated his apprentice, Darth Vader, lord of the Sith. When the emperor used his powers to attempt to murder Luke via force lightning, the inner “Annie” within Vader sprung forth, and he was redeemed, as he threw his master off a balcony, and into oblivion. If the emperor had known Luke just marginally better, he probably would have made him turn to darkness, Vader would be dead, and the rebellion would be crushed. Because of Palpatine's ignorance, and mostly because of it, Vader was redeemed, the evil Empire toppled, and Luke was even stronger within the light.

Ignorance of an enemy will always cause failure, and it can be seen everywhere. Take WWII for another example. When we were fighting the Japanese, they thought that with their code of bushido and their highly disciplined soldiers they would kill us all and send us back home with our “tails between our legs”. But their ignorance of us, and our resolve to win after the atrocity at Pearl harbor, that we atom-bombed two of their cities. No one would have thought that we would resort to nuclear weapons to end the war, but we did, and another act of violence captivated the world. They surrendered to the might of the United States soon afterward. Never underestimate a country that was founded by rebels.

If a country has many spies in another country, they will never be ignorant of the administration within the country because they will be privy to all the details about it. A spy could give you sensitive information, like where the army will be next, or where the shipment of uranium powder will subsequently arrive at, and where the stealth bombers will strike. Through such information, an ambush could be laid for the army, the powder could be seized and used for your own purposes, and the stealth bombers could be shot down. Through such manipulation, one could turn the tide of a war, and bring either peace or destruction. Without such information, the enemy army might defeat and seize a key city, the powder could be turned into a nuclear weapon and used against you, and the stealth bombers would bomb an important weapons facility or major urban center. Without such information, you could lose the war.

If a country is devoid of such knowledge, wars cannot be won, and the ignorance of one side will be the victory for another. If you do not have knowledge of your enemy, you are bound to fail.

In some religions, like Buddhism, ignorance is considered as a terrible state of affairs. The Buddha, when he became enlightened, was freed of his ignorance of the universe. I have never known how it feels to be enlightened, and I probably never will, in this incarnation anyway. In my own room, I have a *thangka* (a Tibetan Buddhist painting attached to a bed of silk) with a demon-eating monster, which holds heads in some of its massive hands and stomps on demons of ignorance, symbolizing, obviously, the triumph over ignorance.

Ignorance is a double-edged sword, it can help, and it can hurt. If you do not know that someone you love is dead, you will not feel “downer” emotions and passions, which you would feel if you did know. This can be considered good because you do not have an out of control psyche, but bad as well because you have no resolution.

“There is no passion. There is serenity”

Serenity can be defined as peace, peacefulness, tranquility, quiet, stillness, or placidity. Passion is defined as a strong, barely controllable emotion, an outburst of anger, an intense sexual love, or strong enthusiasm.

In battle, serenity is achieved through conquering your inner demons, like anger, hate, or fear. When you have a passion for something, say, baseball, you are driven to watch every game, collect the cards, buy some cool memorabilia that your favorite player or team wore, and catch those homeruns. You can always get more money with a home run than with anything else.

Or, a better example would be the passion of revenge. In many action movies and video games, most recently *The Punisher*, about some ex-FBI dude whose family got massacred by the mafia and he went on a murderous rampage, killing all of them. This man had a strong passion within him to kill every single person connected to the massacre. But then he lost complete control, and started to murder not just the mafia that murdered his family, but also people who murdered, or raped, or molested, or any other bad thing. He let his inner demons, his passions, possess him, and drive him to mass murder.

Most people would say that revenge is a warranted, natural response to such a thing as mass murder of your family. But the stronger man would never let his passions take hold

of him, and instead he would go for a more peaceful approach; hunting down and bringing to justice every single person, so they would rot in jail for their crimes. But this could be seen as even worse, instead of granting them a merciful demise, they would waste away for the rest of their lives, suffering until their deaths.

If a Jedi is to succeed without succumbing to darkness in the world is to beat down his/her passions. Just like emotion, passion can cloud your judgment and eventually lead to the dark side.

In the movies and video games, the Sith have always taught that your anger, hate and fear will set you free, that with no moral restraints you will be unhindered in your quest for power. They say that you must let go of your high morals and let your passions rein, so you will realize your true potential. However, many would agree with me that anger, hate, and fear are not the ways to power in this day and age. It's more like money, cunning, and bribery that make the man. But that's not the point. The Point is that passion and emotion always, somehow, lead to the dark side if they control you. Passion is not something that can be completely banished from the psyche of any person. Everyone is susceptible to falling to his/her passions, if whatever mental blow you take is great enough or whatever person that influenced you to darkness, then you will eventually fall. No one should be surprised that Anakin Skywalker fell from the light, being that he was the friend, unwittingly, of Darth Sidious for many years, who was silently training him, waiting for the right moment to sic him on the Jedi.

A prime example in the star wars universe of someone falling to their passions is the 20-some year old Anakin, in Attack of the Clones, on Tatooine. One night on the planet of Naboo, Anakin had a terrible nightmare about his mother (which could have been a force premonition), and he could not ignore his thoughts of her any longer. Betraying his oath to the Jedi and Obi-wan to remain on Naboo and safeguard Senator Padme Amidala, they traveled to Tatooine to find his mother. He found out by his old slave master that she had been married off to a man named Lars.

Anakin went to the Lars homestead, and found his mother missing, and that she had sired a child with the man named Lars, who was Owen. This "Owen" was the Uncle Owen from the first movie. But finding that his mother, Shmi, was missing, Anakin went off in search of her, and found her broken body in a Sandpeople camp. Possessed by a murderous rage to avenge his mother, Anakin murdered every single Sandperson, and fell to the dark side for a brief moment in time, a moment that would be overshadowed by all his evil deeds that would come.

As you may know, Anakin had to leave his mother on Tatooine so he could have a better life as a Jedi knight. Even at so young an age, his fall to darkness was already set in motion. If he had not left his mother, who had always stayed in his mind every since he left Tatooine, he would not have fallen to his passions when he discovered her dead, which showed how feeble the grasp he had on his passion, and he probably would not have "died", as Obi-wan put it when describing him.

Serenity is almost always achieved through meditation and good deeds. Good deeds are fairly obvious, they make you feel good. They always have made me feel good, anyway. If I ever give a homeless person some money, I always feel better because I have made their life a little easier and it shows me how lucky I am. If I make a person feel good on their day, it will almost always make me feel good as well.

A prime example of serenity is the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, not all the other ones that sprung up after him. As you may already know, Siddhartha was brought up as a royal prince, and his birth was somewhat of an odd thing. When he was born, he was already the height, weight and size of a two-year old, as well as possessing remarkable intellect, being able to articulate many words upon birth. Before his birth, however, his mother had a wondrous dream, in which an elephant with many a tusk stabbed her, and she instantly knew that she was pregnant. His father had a yogi (a holy man) divine what would happen in the life of his son. There were two scenarios; one, he would be a great king, his father liked this scenario. The second was that he would be a holy man, bringing peace and tranquility to many, even after his death. But he would sacrifice his royal heritage, and go into a life of frugality. His father, expectedly, did not like this scenario at all, and decided to keep his son from seeing all things bad, like suffering, disease, oldness, death, etc. So Siddhartha grew up in many palaces, only eating the finest foods and only seeing the finest things and the finest people. He never saw the things his father deemed as bad, and lived a peaceful, fairly uneventful childhood. Up until his teens.

One day, Siddhartha called his charioteer, because he wanted to go out for a ride. On his way out, he was surrounded by handsome men and beautiful women, and no one was wrinkled, old, or ill. But out in the crowd, almost undetectable, was an old man. Siddhartha became troubled at the sight, and asked his charioteer, "Why does that man look like that?" The Charioteer replied, "That man is old. When you are very old, you will look like that as well." Siddhartha was troubled by this, and was taken back to his palace.

The next day, Siddhartha went out again, and again he was greeted by handsome men and beautiful women. But, yet again, he picked out a person in the crowd, but this time, the man was ill. Siddhartha asked his charioteer, "Why is that man like that?" His charioteer replied, "That man is ill. When germs enter your body, you will look like that."

Siddhartha was again troubled, and again asked to go back to his palace.

The next day, Siddhartha solicited his charioteer to go out for a ride in his chariot once more. Siddhartha again passed the same people, who were, as always, delighted to see him. But again, he found an anomaly within the beauty that surrounded him. A dead man, covered in a shroud, which was carried by strong men, and was doggedly followed by a string of weeping mourners. Siddhartha asked his charioteer, "Why is that man like that?" And his charioteer answered, "Well, that man is dead. When you are very old, your body will fail, and you too will die." Siddhartha was troubled by this, and he went back to his palace.

When he returned to his home, he thought long and hard about the things he had seen in his chariot rides. After much thought and serious pondering, Siddhartha decided to go on a journey to find the way to end suffering. His wife and his father both tried to dissuade him, but he relinquished his royalty, and went on the path of starving himself and extreme frugality.

One day, after many years of barely eating and heavy meditating, a young girl offered to give him a bowl of rice. He accepted, and ate it all. His other comrades, who were following the same path, refused to talk to him, and he was forced to abandon them. Siddhartha then traveled the countryside, trying different things and many philosophies that he encountered. One day, he just decided to meditate under a tree until he was

enlightened. The god of hell, who heard of his attempts at reaching enlightenment, laughed at him and tried to break his focus. Repeatedly, he sent demons at him, to scare and taunt Siddhartha, but Siddhartha never flinched. Eventually, the demon lord gave up; when he saw that he could not affect Siddhartha. Soon after, Siddhartha became enlightened.

Siddhartha realized that there was a middle path, which he believed was the best for people. He thought that you should not live all high and mighty, above the people, and also you should not live in starving pain and the severe frugality that he had tried years ago. That you should just live a regular life that was neither too good nor too bad, just in the middle.

The Buddha achieved serenity by finding his true path within himself, and by helping many others find the truth within them. He became enlightened, in some part because of the serenity he achieved.

It is always important to find your own path your own way. No one person should be able to tell you it. Everyone will eventually find their path and achieved serenity through it.

But serenity can never be achieved through the dark side. In our world, I like to think of the dark side as the fundie republicans and the light as socialistic democrats. The democrats care deeply about the environment (most, anyway) because they know we will all perish without it to sustain us. Most are out there for the good of the people, not the corporation or businessmen.

However, the republicans are out there to destroy the environment to further their own ends, and usually to help the corporations that brought them to the top. Not to say that the dem's are all high and pious compared to the republicans, but some of the conservatives like Dubya are sure kiss-asses to the American corporations.

Many of the political issues in my country I see as a battle between dark and light, and it doesn't look like the light is winning, either.

“There is no chaos. There is harmony.”

Many countries are in the grip of chaos and anarchy at this very moment. Iraq, which the United States invaded, is mainly in chaos and disorder. Nationalist forces continue to berate the American soldiers, whilst the new, fledgling democracy can do nothing to stop it. People are dying on both sides, American and Iraqi alike.

Innocent people are senselessly murdered in car bombings and by the fanatic suicide bombers that plague the war-torn countries of the Middle East. Children die. Adults die. Everyone dies. And not just Iraqi people, but workers who want to help build the new Iraq, who is there to help, not hurt.

But they are taken anyway, filmed by fanatic terrorists, and either are brutally murdered with swords, most commonly, or, rarely, set free.

Even more advanced countries like the United States are in chaos, the dollar is rapidly falling in value among European countries, the stock market is in the toilet, there is a steadily increasing unemployment rate, and corrupt corporations rule the administration. In some ways, my country is in more chaos than Iraq, but at least people aren't killed in massive numbers. At least we aren't bombed all the time, and at least we don't have to watch our backs every second of the day.

Think of Africa. It is also in chaos, tremendously so. People are dying left and right, from malaria, AIDS, and other diseases. And the natives don't even try to stop it. Men are always raping women, contracting and passing on the deadly virus to others, not caring if they live or die.

Chaos is not a good state to be in. Inner turmoil does not turn you to darkness as emotions and passions have the potential to do, but it still clouds your judgment as they would. Inner chaos causes a person to make decisions based on fear and anxiety, and usually without a clear head.

With so much chaos and disorder in the world, how can there really be harmony? Start small. There is harmony buzzing around you, but some cannot sense its presence. In nature, it is everywhere. Wolves feed on birds; birds feed on snakes, snakes on mice, mice on plants. Without one, the others cannot survive. They live in perfect synchronization and harmony between themselves.

Think of what things would be like if just one of these animals did not exist. If the grass did not exist, the mice would die, and the snake would die, and the bird, and the wolf. And what else feeds on grass? Deer, elk, rabbit. They too, would die. And the animals that ate them, like bear, would die as well. The snakes and reptiles would die because there were no more mice or rabbits in their territory, and berries and vegetables would not work for them. The fungus that fed off of dead creatures would die as well, because there would be nothing dead to feed off of. The smaller species would die from a lack of food, and the larger species would die because of the smaller species were their food. If one plant, the grass, just went extinct, this entire ecosystem would just collapse.

Humans can currently never achieve true harmony, because we don't have the option to even try. We build skyscrapers, stone and wooden buildings and we destroy more and more habitat to create our frivolous, vile, disgusting creations. We destroy the homes of other creatures to create our useless buildings, animals go extinct because of our selfishness, and ecosystems die from the vacuum the extinction of that one animal has caused.

We humans cannot achieve it because all of our creations, the machines, the buildings, the computers, they prevent us from achieving harmony with the rest of the world. We may live in a false harmony with our lifeless machines, but these machines do not live in harmony with the rest of life, so, we, too, do not.

To actually achieve harmony and abandon the chaos that society has brought down on our heads, we must renounce all that is human. All of our precious 1968 Corvettes, our laptops with the advanced RAM power, all of the useless iPods that store thousands of songs. We have to renounce our manmade dwellings and demolish our large buildings, until nothing is left. And then, when all of our useless creations are gone, we will finally be in harmony, and in balance with the Force, as we were meant to be.

But that seems fairly drastic, no? No one is going to renounce all of our machines and luxuries, because humanity is a selfish, arrogant, and overly-indulgent race. Especially the capitalists, whose greed blinds them to the truth; that they are killing us all with their lust for power and money. Loggers who take down our majestic forests for our homes,

taking away oxygen from the air and disrupting the entire ecosystem of the world, tobacco companies who poison our people with addictive smoke, and the car companies, who create their vile metal beasts that pollute our air and melt our icecaps into mush. Every action, no matter how small, will send a ripple through the Force. From the smallest of acts, great things can be achieved. Greed and lust will all destroy us in the end. I just hope that it won't come too quickly.

"There is no death. There is the Force."

Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter'.

We all know this one, but what does it mean to you?

'Death is only the beginning'

The beginning of what? The after-life, worm food?

On a simple physical level, we are made up of energy. Physics tells us that energy cannot be created or destroyed it can only be altered or transferred. At the point of death, the body is either buried, thus providing food for small invertebrates, insects etc and compost for vegetation, or is burned to produce heat and ash. The ash can then be sprinkled onto the earth, where it acts as a fertilizer. The energy that we contain is transferred and the cycle of life continues. In some cases, organs and tissues are removed to be transplanted into other people, to save or improve their lives.

Now I'm just speculating here, but if I died, right now, and was buried, that would mean, eventually, the bugs would get to my corpse, and digest me into nothingness. I then would be excreted to make fertilizer, which will feed the plants, which might feed people and which will also produce oxygen, sustaining others. The energy really does keep changing hands.

On a spiritual level, many of us believe that the body is simply the vehicle for the soul. At the point of death, the soul returns to its maker, to a greater collective conscious or to 'heaven'. There have been many attempts to prove/disprove the existence of an afterlife. The closest many come is a near-death experience, where individuals are able to describe what was happening to them at a point of clinical death, often from a viewpoint 'above' their own bodies. Scientists have tried to debunk this myth, suggesting that the patient was somehow physically aware of their surroundings, also suggesting that the often-cited 'white light' was simply the glare of the theatre/overhead lighting. However, this does not sufficiently explain the detail and accuracy with which these individuals recall what was happening to them when they were clinically dead.

So, our bodies are the temporary vehicles for that 'something' which makes us who we are. Call it 'personality', call it 'soul'. We come from and return to the Force. Or do we?

You might recall, in the original trilogy, that when Yoda and Obi-wan die, their bodies completely dissolve into the Force. But what exactly happens when you return to the Force? Are you in complete and utter paradise, your every desire fulfilled, like in the

Christian heaven? Or, like Buddhist nirvana, are we taken back, and if we have not yet achieved enlightenment, we are cast back in a new body, either a human or an animal. Or a stone. But if we are worthy, we are reabsorbed into perfect harmony with Nirvana. The Star Wars universe tells us that we lose our identity once we die and return to the Force, and that we will never return to this plain. But as you all know, nothing is impossible within the Force. And that is how Qui-Gon Jinn was able to return, teaching Obi-wan and Yoda to keep their identities and not be completely reabsorbed upon death. Somehow, Vader learned it as well.

This makes things kind of confusing. What happens at death? To really know, let us hear the stanza again. There is no death, there is the force. If the Force is everything around us, permeating around us and binding us together, then anything is possible. Maybe we all die differently, we will never know. It is true when they say “death is the greatest adventure.”

The Force’? An intangible energy which binds us all together? The manifestation of a ‘higher power’? Magic?

All things are made up of atoms, which are nuclei orbited by electrons spinning at huge speeds. At certain times, if all the electrons are on one side of the atom, the other side will have a small positive charge. If an atom close by has a small negative charge on one side, the two atoms will be attracted. This is called Van De Waals force. So even something as seemingly 'lifeless' as a rock or pebble has all these little forces within it all the time.

If you are wearing plastic soled shoes and you slide your feet over a nylon carpet, there's a good chance you'll get an electric shock the next time you touch something metal, due to the build up of static electricity.

I could bore you silly with more of this kind of example, but I won't. Suffice it to say, there are lots of 'little forces' everywhere! And they are capable of 'connecting' and it is possible to manipulate them.

However you describe it, or relate to it, most of us agree it exists. The Force is its own reward. The good thing about being in touch with the Force is being in touch with the Force. For those of us lucky or skilled enough to connect with it on a daily basis, it is a real gift.

I believe the Force is neither Light nor Dark, good nor bad, although it has the capacity to achieve results that may be considered such. The Force just ‘is’. It is the Force users who change its perspective. I believe that the Force is always moving towards balance, equilibrium and harmony. In many ways harmony is benevolent, but we may have to suffer some hardships in order to achieve that balance.

Jedi Template

"John went to the store to by a loaf of bread."

What does that statement mean to you?

Some of you are probably laughing right now. "What do you mean, "what does that statement mean"?" you ask. The guy is just going to the store. There's nothing hidden in that.

You'd be surprised though, just how far others might take it.

"John had really gone to a temple to gain the secret of sustaining life. Bread is called *the staff of life*, and thus it symbolizes that he is getting special knowledge for his own life."

"John is going to an outside source for answers to his life, rather than looking within. He is seeking his nourishment elsewhere, looking for someone else to provide, rather than nourishing himself. He can't make his own bread; he can't provide his own nourishment. In other words, he can't sustain himself."

"John is self sustained and fully aware of what he has to do. He knows he has to get the bread, he knows where it is, and knows how to get it, plus he has the means to do it. John is a natural leader."

"Why does he have to buy a stack of money?"

There are a lot of different, crazy things that one can come up with for that little sentence. There are tons of different views on that one statement, and people will adamantly back them up too, forming their own beliefs on who John is, and what he is doing.

Of course, there is also what the statement actually says.

"John went to the store to buy a loaf of bread."

That's it.

There are just some things that are just universally obvious. No matter what kind of crazy things you can come up with, even if they are true, there are a few simple truths that pretty much say what's needed. No condiments, no artificial colors or additives.

The reason why I bring this up, (which has probably brought a few chuckles to people), is because in a few seconds, I'm going to bring up another statement, actually a question, that is a wee bit more controversial. (I wonder how many people will still be chuckling when they read it....)

"What is a Jedi?"

Now, I'll be the first to admit here that the word Jedi means a lot of things to a lot of

people. We all got different views on what one is, in terms of our own little world. And we all know what and who they are in the movies; at least, I hope we all do. After all, that's where it all came from. Things get a bit cooperated though, when we use the term in our own lives. It's a bit easier fantasy wise (I like my fantasy medium rare), but things get shadier after that. And it gets even foggier when trying to explain it to others without looking like you needs a straitjacket, but that's another story.

Anyway, we all got our own different views on what a Jedi is. But the truth of the matter is, there is a template. You have to kind of be close to that template you know, if you are going to use that word for yourself. Lucas pretty much set up that template when he did the movies, so let's see the basics of it. (If anyone sees something essential that I missed, please feel free to add.)

Jedi Template

A Jedi strives to flow with the Force (nature, or the cosmos, if you will).

A Jedi upholds Justice.

A Jedi develops personal powers which flow with the Force.

A Jedi is humble.

A Jedi is well trained in martial art skills.

A Jedi will do whatever it takes to avoid a violent situation, and will look for a peaceful solution. But when faced with no alternative but to fight, will do so without hesitation.

A Jedi strives to keep one's emotions in moderation, and will not let them control them.

A Jedi will help others when they are able to do so.

A Jedi will do what has to be done in any given situation.

Ok, I'll admit that's a crude list, but I think I got the essentials.

Now, in "real life", there are obviously going to be some changes. We don't have lightsaber here, well, real working ones anyway. We don't have Force powers...not to the extent of the movies anyway. We pretty much levitate things by picking them up. The only spaceships we fly (well, besides the NASA guys) are in video games. At least some of us have the cool looking robes....

Anyway, there are some quirks. But still, there is a basic guideline here that is pretty much adaptable. Plus, many of us are on spiritual paths that reflect this template, which is why it is easy for us to adapt the name for the purposes of this site. We may have some extra views, and different ways to go about this. But there is still a common thread, and a

basic definition one has to follow. If you aren't following it, why call yourself Jedi here? Of course you can do whatever the hell you want, but you have to admit, there are some basic principles here that cannot be broken.

So if somebody points out these principles to someone else, and tells them that this is what a Jedi does and is, would we agree that it would be wrong to then say that someone is wrong because a Jedi is different things to different people?

Yeah we got a lot of different views. Doesn't change the underlying principles. You can't be a cop if you didn't pass the tests. Cops are different things to different people. Some see them as upholders of the law. Some see them as protectors of capitalist property. Some see them as pigs. But no matter the views, you know a cop when you see one.

The same with all this Jedi Academy stuff here. Things are what they are. For example, it would be kind of weird for me to take nunchaku and call them my lightsaber. A lightsaber is basically a sword, not a flail like weapon. It would make somewhat more sense if I took out my Jian (Chinese sword) and called it a lightsaber. See what I mean?

This is not by any means forcing my opinions on what a Jedi is to anyone. We all pretty much know what a Jedi is; I'm just restating it and putting it on the table. That's basically what I do here; I take things out in hope and put it on the table. It's up to you whether or not you want to pick it up. But that won't change what it is. I don't put things on the table unless I am absolutely sure that it's true. I don't like to waste my or your time. If I'm going to post something up here that I feel is beneficial for you guys, I'd better make sure it is worth your time to read it. Otherwise, why bother? Even when I post up asking you guy a question because I don't know about something, I still want to make sure it isn't a waste of time.

This is not a master talking here. I never claimed that title, and I never will. Witnesses will bear me out, and those who think I have are pretty much looking for trouble. I cannot be a master at something that I am still learning about, it, my path. When I post up a lesson, I'm posting up something that was taught to me, and that I gladly place before you guys to benefit from. It's for your sake, not mine. I can pretty much keep all this stuff to myself. I don't have to post here. But I do because I like it. There are a lot of things that have helped me out, and it would be very selfish of me not to spread it around for others to benefit from. If we are all walking in the same direction supposedly, why not help each other out? And entertain each other along the way?

The Tao of the Jedi

With all the recent talk about the Way of the Jedi and such, I thought it would be nice to bring up some topics that would allow everyone an opportunity to jump on the springboard of the Academy without feeling stepped on. I believe my good friend Tian Shen had a wonderful quote in his journal, "There is only one destination - but many paths to travel..."

As often seen in Zen or Taoist books, it's not the goal or destination that matters as much as the journey, or in this case, 'the many paths to travel'. After a basketball game, everyone goes home. That's the destination, win or lose. But how will you get there? Will you make those players around you better? Be a strong leader? Hit those clutch free throws? Punch a referee? Commit aggressive and brutal fouls? In a way, it can be a tool because you can find out a lot about your character, behavior, and determination (among other things). Is the Jedi concept much the same? Perhaps it is also just a tool, a wonderful tool nonetheless, to explore many of these questions and have the delight or disgust in finding the answers as we go along in a neverending quest.

As for the varying levels of Jedi realism, I don't think it really matters. True or Real Jedi, just a person of Jedi philosophy, Jedi warrior, RPG Jedi, or whatsoever. After all, being REAL doesn't necessarily mean you are a person with substance or character. For example, you could be a REAL idiot. Or, just because you wear a shirt that says "Calvin Klein" across the front doesn't mean it's necessarily a real Calvin Klein made shirt. Yet, it can be, even if it ISN'T plastered across the front like an advertisement. The difference is *how* it's made and the *quality*... and that carries over to mean your *quality* as a human being, and *how* you apply these Jedi aspects into your life. A nice shirt is a nice shirt—only superficial people make a big fuss just because a high profile brand name is written up, down, left, right, and all across it. To digress for a quick moment, I find this to be evident on the main site where Baal refers to many books' authors as Jedi, not so much because they have something to do with Star Wars, but because their character embodies certain Jedi traits.

On the same token, being 'non-real' (I don't really want to use the word fake) doesn't mean you are lacking substance or depth, either. Some of our greatest sources for inspiration, character, and role-models come from an actor's portrayal, or even a book. Given how many people look up to Obi-Wan or Qui-Gon because of the stellar performances by Sir Alec Guinness or Liam Neeson, I'd hesitate to say there is anything inherently wrong with not being 'real'. Some people find cyberspace where they can most be themselves, even though it's (in a way) a fantasy world of text and graphics. Don't knock someone else's vehicle just because it's not the same as your means of transportation.

I think the whole Jedi angle is difficult because we are always on the outside looking in—this ranges from the citizens of Coruscant to people who watch Star Wars. Think about it. In this day and age, most people who are 'masters' of their skill, be it writing or being a Zen monk, often have people come to them who are wide-eyed and completely humbled. Yet when people ask them questions about what they do, most of them shrug and simply say they are just like everyone else, but have worked hard at what they do. It's really the same with JEDI of Star Wars. Sure, everyone views them as these awesome galactic police, but inside their order, everyone struggles to maintain their balance, follow the code of Jedi that has been passed down for over a millennia, and to live up to the awesome legacy that is a Jedi Knight, all the while trying to maintain their identity. They don't prance around waving their lightsabers shouting that they are Jedi. Most are even a little turned off by the idea because it places them in an awkward situation in an off-

world planet, where they are demanded to assume responsibility, or denied privileges because some envy their position. Well, no, we don't live in the Star Wars universe, but often times we try to cast the Jedi concept on ourselves in a way that doesn't quite fit in with who we are. Again, it's the problem of being on the outside trying to look in, rather than being a HUMAN BEING first, and using these things as guides, resources, and tools. We all really need to start by saying "I'm a human being.", because right away we can take into account faults, ego, error, mistakes, and different viewpoints. It cuts across racism, feminism, misogyny, nationalism, even Jediism (if you want to call it that). And that, in my opinion, is always a good start.

So I think the important questions to ask are, "How can I be ME? What tools are at my disposal in order to accomplish this never-ending task of actualization? How can I set goals and standards that are high, but not out of reach?"

The key is, in your quest for knowledge and wisdom, don't forget that you are ultimately a human being. It just so happens all of us are different. Here at the Academy, we share this common ground of interest in Jedi philosophy (for the most part)... it's up to us to take the steps to communicate THROUGH this. It's almost like the language of this place- we all have different experiences, backgrounds, and styles, but if we don't attempt to communicate on the same level, we can yell at each other until we're blue in the face. The JEDI concept allows us to speak to each other on a more fluent and eloquent level- the more we learn and share, the better we can convey our point without it being mangled in the process through lack of understanding. Unfortunately, some of us just happen to have different Jedi dialects, and refuse to learn 'Basic' in order to be able to hold a decent conversation with anyone. Or as I like to quote it, "No one can talk to me unless they accept and learn MY way of Jedi." Not a good way to get ahead.

Of course, there are people who inherently do not see eye to eye on what the core of Jedi virtues and arts are- that's fine. After all, as Lucas pointed out, people invest ideas into things of Star Wars that he hadn't intended for. Doesn't mean you can't borrow words, phrases, or concepts (metaphorically speaking) into your own in order to be a more complete person in your quest!

So with all the Star Wars films, George Lucas is tossing the ball into our court. What are we to do now? Run with it? Shoot some hoops? Hit it back across the net? Throw it at somebody? Beats me. Use your imagination, and think! It's an exciting time to be exploring your spirituality through the way of the Jedi, but only as much as you make it so. Or as Bruce Lee once wrote, "We will turn it into play, but we will play seriously!"

Types of Jedi

As I listed in another post, I differentiate Jedi into different types, or categories. The four (I've added one to my own list) most prominent ones that I can think of are the "bureaucratic" types, the knighthood, and healers, and the academics. Let me explain a little of what I see, so as to make some sense.

Councilors serve as political delegates. They are the more diplomatic Jedi that work with governments to settle disputes and act to represent Jedi within government. Example: Leia

Guardians are best prepared for combat. These are the knights of the order, the "galactic" heroes. Probably the most common conception of Jedi based on their more obvious presence in the minds of the average person. Example: Luke

Healers are the "doctors" of the Jedi. Probably the least likely to get into physical confrontations, healers are just that. It is through them that better techniques in self preservation are discovered. Example: Cilghal

Academics are the historians, the lore masters, and our memory. I see them as partly kin to the guardians as they are likely to pursue history and lore where ever it is to be found. They may express it dryly, as a professor, or as poetically as a bard. Example: Tionne

these are the distinct classifications that I have been able to derive, and was wondering if anyone else had noticed this kind of thing, and if so, how do they break down? Also, does anyone have something to add to the list?

I am interested in this because I do not see Jedi simply as Holy Warriors, as is the impression I am sure many people have of Jedi Knights, but rather as a complex group with differing abilities as Masters Naya and Kett show as healers and as Master Sah'ar shows as a Knight. Master Jil-Qun has shown that he is an incredible artist, and I wonder how such a fantastic ability would add to the constructs that I have viewed. If it would even fit in, as I do not know. It may very well be an individual interest expressed by a Jedi, as is always possible, as not all things fit nicely into nice little boxes with pretty ribbons. I also believe that all the different types exist because they further understanding of the Force in different ways. If it were not for the diplomats, we might not have an understanding of mind influencing and calming abilities, as the knights provide ever increasing knowledge of how to apply the Force to physical things, the healers to discover better ways to perfect our bodies, and the academics to provide us with the knowledge of who we are and what we have done and why we do it still. So, I would like your opinions on this, what differing types of Jedi do you see, if any? Or is it all the same to you?

Jedi Words of Wisdom

This lecture was written about the quote, 'There is no try', after I found out that many young Jedi don't understand things like it. I hope these help with your training.

"Do or do not, there is no try" - Yoda.

A pretty basic line, which will be the basis of to days lecture. So many of you have heard it, just as many say it to other younger Jedi, but how many of you know what it really

means or why it is used in the Jedi way? If you 'try' to do something there are only two outcomes, you can do it, or you can't, there isn't a in between. For example you can 'try' levitating a rock. The outcome is either the rock floats or it stays where it originally was. There is no half way. If you try it leaves doubt in your mind and doubt will cause you to fail. Therefore the Jedi Way teaches that there is no try to get rid of any doubt. Now with this knowledge of only having two outcomes when you 'try' lift that rock, you are already willing to reach out with the force and lift it and KNOW that you can lift it, (else you wouldn't be feeling the force and going through a levitation technique), then you will.

"In my experience there's no such thing as luck" - General Kenobi.

Said by General Kenobi and one of my favorite lines, it shows that the Jedi are truly masters of their life events.

What is luck, nothing but random events that go in your favor. But to the Jedi there is no luck, the force guides us, or we can guide ourselves when not listening to the force. When we actively use the force to control our self's or environment, we can sway events in our favor, as seen in the movies. So a Jedi can make their own 'luck', allowing the desired outcome to be made. Since these outcomes are no longer random, therefore they are no longer luck. Many people may think it is bad 'luck' to be busy at work or have trouble at school, but a fully trained Jedi can control things like stress and work load, hence a Jedi shouldn't have problems with being tired or stressed. I would now like to move on to my next quote of:

"Nothing happens by chance" - Qui Gon.

Like I mentioned above, we can actively control what events are happening, or we can let go and allow the force to guide us. When we do the later we are acting on instinct and the outcome of ALL events have purpose. By dropping a coin and stopping to pick it up, you could start the ball rolling on a chain of events that could change yours or someone else's life for ever. Think, What would of happened if Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon weren't picked as the ambassadors? Possibly Anakin wouldn't of been discovered and you can figure out the rest. What if Luke and Ben weren't stopped by troopers in Mos Eisley? The Falcon could of arrived at Alderaan early and the ship and its cargo could have been destroyed along with the planet. Again I'll let you play with what happened next.

So all events are changing the course of time for the better or worse. Now if you apply the above quote's explanation with this one, you can see how a Jedi can control many things and always get a positive outcome.

I have decided to roll these three quotes into one because they are all very similar and can be linked together easily.

The first quote is rather important as when this state is reached, you will actually be doing what you want. Basically you are using the force to guide what you want to do. This can best be seen by what Anakin did during the pod race. I can also describe a personal experience I've had relating to this. I was once out playing an arcade game when I was momentarily distracted by some people walking past. I took my eyes off the screen and while they were still off the screen, I scored two direct hits on two separate enemies.

This could not have been done if I wasn't in a calm and relaxed state, feeling where I should of been shooting, while looking somewhere else. A person not in tuned with the force could of easily put that down to 'luck'. That was a simple use for the technique, but it can be used for many major applications. Knowing if and what to do if something happens while you are driving or in combat is a great advantage. So remember, a Jedi must remain calm and at peace to listen to their instinct and let go, to allow these instincts to take over.

"Size matters not", "Only different in your mind", "Unlearn what you have learnt" - Yoda.

Possibly the most important piece of wisdom from the movies. These lines try and free your mind from what has been drummed into you all your life. Possibly why Jedi training should start from a young age. From this age we are told what we can and can't do. I'm not talking about good and bad, but things like not being able to affect our surroundings with our minds, that muscle mass is some how proportionally relates to the amount that we can lift, or that you have to visit a doctor to get better. But as Jedi we know this is not all true, but for people who don't know or understand how a person can do what has been deemed physically 'impossible', it is very difficult. Therefore you MUST unlearn what you have learnt to be able to use the force to its full extent. So what makes us see boulders as heavy and fire as hot? It is what has been placed into our minds, many of the things we perceive are because of our minds, such as pain and what we perceive an object to be. In actuality everything is made up of the same matter, so there is not much difference between objects, the only difference between a rock and a ship is the amount and arrangement of their molecules, weight is insignificant as it is only a state of mind. Once you can realize and overcome the fact that 'size matters not', you will be able to control the outside world much more easier. There is little chance that this realization will happen overnight, but with time and meditation, you will be able to gain this insight.

"Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter" - Yoda

This is an excellent line, you could well say that it wraps the word Jedi up into a line. Yoda says that we are luminous, but what does that mean you might ask. For the answer you only have to look at the second half of the quote. Crude matter can be described as something solid, something that will not let another pass through it. Lets take metal and water. If you pour the water on to the metal will it pass through? What if you do the same with air or the force? In all cases it will not, even for the force. This is because the metal is not living, nothing can permeate through it. But for us it is different. Still water and air can't pass through us, at least not in high volumes, but the force can. It flows through us, giving the Jedi their strength and power. So since the force flows through us, NOT around us like the piece of metal, we are luminous.

What else does this quote tell us? It also tells us that a Jedi can overcome great odds. How you might ask. Well lets use an example of a large body builder and a Jedi who are in a confrontation, what would happen? The body builder could be associated with the crude matter, no connection to the force, at least that he knows of, and having to rely on

his own physical attributes. But the Jedi has an ally with him, the force. Because it flows with him and is ALWAYS with him, therefore the Jedi has the advantage, what ever his level of training is and if he uses that advantage wisely he will win.

The line also tells us that we can be one with the force. For when the force flows through us, we are part of the force, and the force is part of us, creating one.

These are only a few of the lessons that can be learnt from this one quote. There are many more that I could go on about, but it would take many pages to cover them all.

These are important lessons that ALL Jedi must learn to fully appreciate what the force has to offer. I will leave you now to ponder what you have read. May the force be with you.

The 21 Maxims

Prowess

To seek excellence in all endeavors expected of a Jedi Knight, martial and otherwise, seeking strength to be used in the service of justice, rather than in personal aggrandizement. A Jedi strives to excel physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, and can put these in motion instantly. This requires discipline, patience and perfect practice, for a Jedi is always mindful of what lies behind and what lies ahead, and prepares for the encounter with his destiny. A Jedi Knight engages in the battle to be victorious - on whatever front he is faced with in the modern world.

Justice

Seek always the path of 'right', unencumbered by bias or personal interest. Recognize that the sword of justice can be a terrible thing, so it must be tempered by humanity and mercy. If the 'right' you see agrees with others, and you seek it out without bending to the temptation for expediency, then you will earn renown beyond measure. Meditate often upon the Force as a means to discern justice, as well as discerning both good and evil.

Loyalty

Be known for unwavering commitment to the people and ideals you choose to live by. There are many places where compromise is expected; loyalty is not amongst them. Jedi can exist in this universe because the Force exists. But the Jedi Order needs more: it requires loyalty. It goes without saying that Jedi should be loyal to one another. They should not squabble or fight. More importantly, though, each Jedi should be aware that he must act in accordance with the wishes of his Master, who must in turn act in accordance with the wishes of the Jedi Council. This is not a question of seniority, but rather of understanding the will of the Force, and in this regard, the members of the Jedi Council are wise council indeed.

Defense

The ideal Jedi Knight is sworn by oath to defend the light. Seeks always to defend you nation, you family, and those to whom you believe worthy of loyalty.

Courage

Being a Jedi Knight often means choosing the more difficult path, the personally expensive one. Be prepared to make personal sacrifices in service of the precepts and people you value. At the same time, a Jedi Knight should seek wisdom to see that stupidity and courage are cousins. Courage also means taking the side of truth in all matters, rather than seeking the expedient lie. Seek the truth whenever possible, but remember to temper justice with mercy, or the pure truth can bring grief. However, it must also be noted that to a Jedi, to be brave in battle proves nothing, as bravery itself proves nothing. A Jedi should be prepared to put aside fear, regret, and uncertainty and either act, retreat, surrender or perish.

Faith

A Jedi Knight must have faith in his beliefs, for faith roots him and gives him hope against the despair that human failings create. A Jedi's strength flows from the Force. A

Jedi's faith is in the Light, and to the One from which it emanates, as his guidance, as his path, as his friend, and as his destiny. The path of a Jedi is a path of inner illumination and the conquering of the lesser self, that the Greater Inner Self, better known as Jedi, may in turn take dominion over the life purpose and destiny of the Outer Self, or Jedi, who resides in the physical.

Humility

Value first the contributions of others; do not boast of your own accomplishments, let others do this for you. Tell the deeds of others before your own, according them the renown rightfully earned through virtuous deeds. In this way the office of Jedi Knighthood is well done and glorified, helping not only the gentle spoken of but also all who call themselves Jedi Knight.

Fearlessness

Fear leads to the Darkside. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, and hate leads to suffering. There is so much superstition and hypocrisy around that one is afraid even to do the right thing. But if one gives way to fear, even truth will have to be suppressed. The golden rule is to act fearlessly upon what one believes to be right. Fearlessness does not mean arrogance or aggressiveness. That in itself is a sign of fear. Fearlessness presupposes calmness and peace of mind. For this, it is necessary to have a living faith in the Light. He who has awakened his spirit to the Light is free from fear. Fear lies in illusions in the mind. Listen always to the still small voice within - commune within by meditation, both moving and sitting still. Practice courage and be unmoved - a mountain of being remains unmoved. When fear is displaced within, ALWAYS replace it with Light. Nature abhors vacuum.

Nobility

Seek great stature of character by holding to the virtues and the duties of a Jedi Knight, realizing that though the ideals cannot be reached, the quality of striving towards them ennoble the spirit, growing the character from dust towards heaven. Nobility also has the tendency to influence others, offering a compelling example of what can be done in the service of rightness.

Franchise

Seek to emulate everything here as sincerely as possible, not for the reason of personal gain but because it is right. Do not restrict your exploration to a small world, but seek to infuse every aspect of your life with these qualities. Should you succeed in even a tiny measure than you will be well remembered for your quality and virtue. Using the Force

for selfish purposes -- self-gain, egotism, even convenience -- crosses the boundary between the light and the dark sides.

Pure Motive

It is true that actions speak louder than words. However, behind every action is a motive and a purpose. Without a sound motive and purpose, action has no meaning, no destination, and lacks a foundation. Action without motive and purpose does nothing other than to move for the sake of moving, beating the air to appear to do something, when in fact is doing nothing, the proverbial spinning wheels in the mud. A Jedi moves with the Force. He meditates upon the will of the Force. A Jedi's action is firmly based upon a deep motivation to serve the Force of Light, and is deeply rooted in purpose. There is no wasted movement or the need for action when none is required, for to a Jedi, action means nothing without a pure motive, or a sound purpose.

Discipline

A Jedi's mind is a calm ocean, like a sea of glass. He realizes that it is in conquering the tides of the emotions as well as reactions to stimulus that allows the Jedi to be victorious in all things, for he is a chalice for the Force, an extension of the Will of the Force. This inner stillness requires much discipline: mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. A Jedi by nature is highly disciplined in all levels of his being, that in the fiery moment where the Force must be released to defend self or others who deserve that loyalty, the action is a clear extension of many years of training and inner discipline.

Focus

A Jedi's focus is in the moment, in the now, realizing that the stylus of time cuts in the present and that history is perpetually in the making. A Jedi Knight realizes that past is important, as well as the future, working to develop the spiritual faculties to perceive and discern such, but not at the expense of the present, of the here and now.

Discretion

It is sometimes necessary for a Jedi to practice discretion. Jedi's do not actively interfere with the lives of the common people. Jedi stand for order and justice; however, Jedi's prioritize and streamline their involvement, and do not allow the misdeeds of the few to interfere with the conscious direction received as to the Will of the Force and how their office as Jedi helps bring these into fruition. The goal of the Jedi should be to create and preserve an atmosphere where justice can flourish, rather than try to create justice

themselves. A byword of Jedi could be, "I may not always agree with your choices, but I will defend your right to choose with my very life."

Meditation

"Every Jedi should spend time meditating each day on the Will of the Force. The reason for this is simple: if one has unwittingly acted contrary to the will of the Force, recognizing the mistake soon after may still gives one time to make amends." By regularly examining one's own motivations, a Jedi could be certain that they would not be allowing emotion, ignorance, or passion to intrude upon their clarity. A Jedi who has no time to meditate May more easily become lost. More to the point, a Jedi who refuses to meditate may already know that their motivations are not pure, and is thus lying to themselves. "The Jedi who needs not the counsel of the Force, to the Darkside listens." (Jedi Master Yoda) Because a Jedi is an integral component of the Light side, it is therefore a prudent practice for the Jedi to also meditate upon the luminous essence of being (the inner light) at least once a day, which purifies the mind, motives and direction

Training

A Jedi's training in the Force never ends. A wise Jedi should strive to remember that there is always something more to learn about the Force. The Force reveals itself to those who have the desire and knowledge to see it, and merely heeding the Force's will is much the same as looking at an elephant's toe and saying, "Now I understand elephants." To continue to grow, a Jedi should train each day.

Integrity

A Jedi's responsibility to the Force is to be honest with himself. As long as the Jedi is not acting for his own self-interest and observes the Code, he is obeying the will of the Force. A Jedi can and should offer advice to those that need it. From a certain point of view, a Jedi is not being dishonest if he allows people to believe what they wish to believe. It is not incumbent upon the Jedi to convince anyone to follow his advice. When a Jedi is serving the Force, he may employ deception, subterfuge, misdirection, and even fraud, as long as he does so with a righteous aim. Do not confuse this with 'moral flexibility'. A Jedi does what needs to be done. But also remember that a Jedi is not above the law.

Morality

Jedi Knights practice noninterference with differing cultures and while Jedi can bring or restore order and justice, they do not themselves it in judgment of others as a rule. Judgment lead to vengeance, and vengeance leads to the Dark Side. Therefore, as a rule, Jedi's are not enforcers of morality per se. However, at the same time, while not judges, Jedi's can be mediators. It is a role they are suited for, and one that works in accordance with the Force since mediation leads to balance.

Engaging in Conflict

Conflict is a fact of life in the galaxy for far too many beings, and no Jedi can hope to remain apart from it. But a Jedi need not embrace conflict. "If a weapon you show, 'A warrior am I!' you say. And who is best, must all other warriors know of you." So, to avoid unnecessary fighting, a Jedi should not advertise his skill. But when it is necessary to actively engage in conflict? The Force will show a Jedi when he has no other options, and a wise Jedi trusts the Force in this regard.

Intervention

A Jedi Knight must not allow evil to take place once they become aware of its working. To remain aloof in situations where a Jedi's intervention would prevent the Dark Side from attaining another foothold is the same as helping it do so. This a Jedi Knight must never do. A true Jedi Knight must constantly be wary of his path, making certain he does not stray toward the Dark Side, but remains firm in the Light. Therefore, when the situation warrants it, the Jedi acts as an extension of the Will of the Force, and is therefore sponsored and backed by that will.

Harmonizing

The path of a Jedi Knight is more than just a system of techniques for controlling, sensing, and altering the Force. It is a deep spiritual ideology of existence, a deeply meaningful and moving panoramic journey and path of the soul and spirit to fully embrace the Light, in which the individual sees his true nature as a part of a larger whole, and claims his own rightful place in the symbiotic whole of the way of things. A Jedi seeks to live in harmony with the universe, focusing on the most serious and intent discipline and gained spherical awareness to reach his goal. There are inherent temptations that seem to create conflict between nature and the mind, which mistakenly urge the Jedi to fall onto easier paths. This the Jedi strive to avoid at all cost, no matter how dear or how tempting. A Jedi should focus his efforts on creating harmony between all beings. They detest violence of any sort; and reluctantly engage in resolving in combat as a last resort when other attempts at conflict resolution have failed.

Jedi Lectures

Positive and Negative, Good and Evil, Light and Dark

This is a lesson that I have learned from a few masters, some human, others events. I'm sure many of the readers here have seen this explained elsewhere in the academy, but I will present it here as well, in a clearer fashion, for I feel that it is very important for those who walk the Path to learn.

There is some confusion out there as to what actions are becoming to a Jedi; what would be more fitting to someone who practices the ways of the "light side" as opposed to the "dark". There have been those who have stated that there are some things that "lightsiders" can't do, for such actions in question belong to the "dark side" of the Force.

Such beliefs are foolhardy however, as the Force is not comprised of "sides", but is a neutral entity. It is in its usage that determines what "side" is being used. The Force just is. It is not "good" or "bad", "light" or "dark", it just is. Water just is. It can bring life as well as end it, for one can drink of it when dying of thirst and feel replenished, or drown beneath its crushing waves. Water can be used for "good" or "evil" purposes, as one can feed plants with it or artificially flood a town, but in itself, it just is. The same with the Force. And the same with actions.

Throughout our existence, we all have to pick and choose what actions will affect our lives. Like the Force, these acts in themselves have no affiliation of their own; they are neutral in nature. There really is no such thing as "good" or "evil" actions", these are labels placed and supposed by humans, who see things in the fog of their emotions. What makes actions seem benevolent or malevolent is the energy behind them that causes the movement, i.e., emotion. Energy+Motion=emotion. Whatever one puts behind the action determines its resulting nature. But in essence, the act in itself is neutral.

One might then ask, what about killing, maiming, stealing and so forth? Aren't they evil? Aren't they of the darkside? Not so, for each one of these acts has been used for benevolence many times in the past. The problem in seeing this lies in not understanding the true nature of actions.

All acts fall into either of two categories: Positive and Negative. Many have confused the term positive for "good" and likewise, Negative for "evil". But this is not necessarily what they are, for the reverse can be true. As we go on you will see how.

Positive actions are acts that are geared toward nurturing, conserving, sustaining, and the building up of something. Examples of such actions are: the giving of a gift, the feeding of a person, curing someone, providing a helping hand to a certain project or function. These acts are all evolutionary.

Negative actions are geared towards harming, spending, breaking, destruction. Examples of such acts are: killing a form of life, smashing a building, lying, stopping an act or event from occurring, stealing, and fighting. These actions are all revolutionary.

Now, many people would lean towards the positive actions, saying that they are examples of "goodness", and that negative acts are evil, but they are sadly deluding and limiting themselves. The truth of the matter is, one must understand and master BOTH kinds of actions, and know which ones to use at what times, if they are to be full human beings. This is especially so for those who walk the unlit path of the Jedi, for one such person is striving to bring themselves to a higher level, and to choose such a discipline means to be in full control and awareness of their thoughts and deeds, as well as know their natures, their usage, and their results.

Remember my friends; do not be fooled into thinking that Positive\Negative is the same as Good\Evil, for as I said, the reverse can be true.

For instance, the act of giving. Giving sounds like a very good thing, doesn't it. If I gave someone a gift, out of the kindness of my own heart, and also to make you feel good, that would be considered "good". But what if I gave you the gift because I wanted something in return, maybe a little something "sweet" if you happen to be a woman I'm trying to "get with"? Doesn't seem so angelic anymore, does it? What if the gift I've given is actually made to harm you, and I'm giving it intentionally just to see you hurt, even killed, just for my own amusement and/or gain. Now we're really getting malignant. But isn't the act of giving supposed to be "good"? No, it's not. It's Positive. Whatever energy is behind it (emotion, intent) determines its morality.

The same can be said for killing. Now if I'm running throughout the country wiping people out for the fun of it, and/or for personal gain (something that is going on even as we speak throughout the world even as this is written), that would obviously be considered as evil. But what if I happen to open a car door and out of nowhere a motorcyclist comes speeding around the corner, smashing right into the door, flying off the bike, and lands completely wrong, breaking his neck. Am I evil for that? What's more, what if I was faced with the horrible blood-thirsty person I described earlier, and the only way I was to stay alive as well as to stop the atrocities from continuing was to end his life? Would that be evil? Or something that just had to be done?

As one can see, actions can be used towards any end, no matter what the act may be. It all depends on the energy behind it. When learning of this, the first step is to understand the nature of actions and when to use them for benevolence or in the Jedi Way. The next step is to be able to choose actions without being influenced by strong emotion, for it is through an unclouded mind, that one will act clearly.

For example, the negative act of fighting is something that a Jedi should never do liberally, for it can result in pain and suffering, as well as the loss of life. Yet, many Jedi are well trained in the arts of combat, for they know that it is a necessity that they be able to defend themselves as well as others, and that at times one has no choice but to fight. In the movies and books, Jedi don't carry lightsabers for nothing, you know.

Let's take a bar scene, in which Fred sees a woman get slapped. Now Fred gets angry about that, and remembering his skills in Hung Gar Kung Fu, he quickly confronts the troublemaker ("So you like hitting women, eh?!). Infused by his fury, he lets the guy have it. Unfortunately, as it usually is the case with things like this, he didn't come alone. And a few of them are packing steel, sharp steel called knives. With the table slightly turned, fear begins to creep up (Oh this, they're going to try to kill me!). So out of fear for his life, Fred goes crazy and fights frantically, throwing bottles and chairs, inevitably starting a bar fight. The next thing you know, he's being hauled off in handcuffs (But officers, I was only trying to help!).

See how important a calm mind is in choosing actions?

Positive and Negative actions are both equally important in life, no one has precedence over another. Like yin and yang, they are both needed, and exist because of each other.

Indeed, they even flow and change into one another. A storm's strong winds and lightning blasts can wreak the land, but the rain can cause new plants to grow and flourish. The negative act of killing a virus easily flows into the positive act of saving a persons life. You must all understand this.

In the end, as I've said, there is really no good or evil, light or dark. There just is. This is a reality that few have discovered, and even fewer have understood fully, much less mastered. It is a reality that we must accept, especially with our actions, if we are to continue to walk

Ego

Everyone one of us has an ego. Our ego is what gives us our individuality, but our ego can also create a sense of self-importance. For instance, when you worry about how others see you or treat you... that are self-importance. Self-pity is a form of self-importance because it gives you the sense that you are being treated unfairly, thereby instilling the belief that you should be treated better than you are.

This is going to be a big shock to some of you... I know it was for me when I first realized it... but THE WORLD OWES YOU NOTHING.

I know... hurts, doesn't it? But it's the truth.

You don't deserve to be treated any better than your being treated, you don't deserve recognition for everything you do or say, you don't need to be in control of every situation, and no one is responsible for making you happy or for your well-being... you are responsible for your own thoughts and feelings, so if you get angry or upset about something, then the problem is with you alone.

It's self-importance that makes these things seem so important to us.

Anger is the best detector of self-importance. Next time you find yourself getting angry ask yourself why?

Is it because you have high expectations of those around you and they fail to live up to your expectations?

Is it because you feel your not being treated fairly?

Is it because "they just don't listen"?

You'll find that your anger almost always revolves around you and your needs.

Whether you are aspiring to be a Jedi or not, letting go of self-importance can be one of the greatest things you can do for yourself. Your self-importance only serves to give you the impression that it's more important to be right than it is to do what is necessary to get

things accomplished effectively. It lies to you and creates false realities. Self-importance is what makes humans believe we are a superior species, when in reality we are no more or less important than grass we walk on.

If you'd rather live a lie, then by all means keep doing what you're doing.

If you want to let go of self-importance and see what it means to truly be free, then start now by facing each new situation by asking yourself this simple question... "If I knew I only had one more day to live, would this really matter?"

If anyone has any questions then feel free to ask... if you have an opinion or experience relating to this then share it... but I ask that there be no debates. If you feel you must debate, then you feel your opinion is more important than someone else's, when in fact, it's not.

Guilt and the Self

In going with the concept that you are your greatest enemy until you are your greatest ally, I wanted to take a moment to discuss one aspect of your enemy: guilt.

There are two kinds of guilt, at least. One, when we actually commit a crime, lie to a friend, cheat on a test, etc. But the other is trickier, and the one that is often most damaging because it is far less easy to fix.

This other guilt is a self-made guilt. Often we have done nothing wrong, we are simply experiencing the essence of being human. However, somewhere inside of us our expectations of ourselves and how we actually are come into extreme conflict. We expect ourselves to make the perfect choices at every moment, say the perfectly right thing, think the perfectly right thought, and in general behave to some ideal that is unrealistic.

Certainly, we should strive to do our best. Yet, we must be realistic with ourselves. Otherwise when we don't live up to these unrealistic expectations--and we DON'T live up to them--we begin to punish ourselves. We feel guilty for the actions, thoughts, and wishes that are so divergent from our expectations. This then becomes a cycle:

Unrealistic expectation---guilt at failure---punish self---promise not to fail again with an even more unrealistic expectation---fail---guilt---punish....well you see where I'm going.

Before long, you have made yourself sick and miserable. The guilt turns to anger at yourself and often at others. The high expectations turn to great amounts of stress that then make ourselves and our relationships hard to maintain in any sort of healthy fashion.

If you find yourself in these situations, then it is time to take a step back, take a deep breath, and go easy on yourself. You must accept your human-ness, your individuality, and your limitations. There is no shame in them, yet so often we feel shameful. This is not fair to our souls.

I especially feel that often younger persons who are starting out on this Jedi path and want to do so well on it come into a conflict between themselves and the perceived Jedi Code. This is a very hard path, and not even the greatest Jedi Master is perfect. How much harder is it to walk this path and be a young person just beginning to find your way in the world? So many new experiences and situations you have to deal with! Of course you cannot make the perfect choices all the time. That is very much human and also very much part of being a youngster. Your spheres of freedom are widening, you are being put into harder situations, meeting more diverse people. It is a time of great conflict as you try to establish yourself in your new role...it is a time of transition from childhood to adulthood. It is fraught with perils! Even the best Jedi among us has fallen.

One of the most important Jedi skills or traits you can learn is to be fair to yourself. Cut yourself some slack. Be understanding of all the things you are going through, learn how all of these things affect you. Push yourself to do better, but don't punish yourself.

It Is a Hard Life

It will be a hard life
One without reward
Without remorse
Without regret
A path will be placed before you
The choice in yours alone
Do what you think you cannot do
It will be a hard life
But you will find out who you are

~ Qui-Gon Jinn

I never believed this path would be an easy one.

I have already given up so much so that I can help others. Most people do not even appreciate what I do for them... some turn it around on me to make me look like the bad one. I never expect anything in return for helping someone, but the joy I feel in my heart at having helped someone... that is the only true reward I will ever know.

So I never believed this path would be an easy one.

I was told from the start that I would have to make decisions that would be the most difficult I'd ever have to make. Part of that means letting go of old ways that no longer serve me. It's hard to imagine how letting go of something that has been a part of you for so long can hurt, but it does. You learn to live with it, though... and accept that you had to change in order to grow.

So I never believed this path would be an easy one.

Sometimes the changes cause you to distance yourself from those you used to spend a lot of time with. It's not because you stopped loving them, but because for someone not on this path, it's difficult for them to understand the changes. You feel yourself changing so dramatically and in so many ways, that you pull away to protect those around you... and to keep your own sanity. Sometimes it hurts, but you accept it as part of the path.

So I never believed this path would be an easy one.

Shamanism is not something I wanted for myself, but that did not stop the "powers" from presenting it to me. We all have our paths to choose... some easier than others...

But I never believed this path would be an easy one.

My decision to accept shamanism as my path did not come to me easily. I was not willing to do the things I would have to do in order to become a shaman and a healer. To accept this path is to accept that your life is no longer yours alone. You now serve humanity and the good of humanity has to take precedence in your life. It was a hard choice, but the fact is... it was always my choice and one I'm glad I have made.

Even though I never believed this path would be an easy one.

I recently had an experience where I nearly steered myself from this path because of my fear. The fear of whom I would become and the things I would have to do. I didn't think I had it in me to do these things, but my teacher showed me that I did. He expressed his faith in my abilities and reaffirmed the fact that he would be helping me every step of the way. This gave me the strength I needed to push forward once again.

So I never believed this path would be an easy one.

I look in the mirror now and I can barely see a shadow of the person I used to be. Sometimes I want that person back, but then I see who I am now and I realize that it's the person I have always been. The real me coming through without all the extra baggage I've taken on over the years. Now I'm curious to see this person in her true light.... she must be quite an amazing person with incredible talents and I can't wait to meet her.

I never believed this path would be an easy one. I don't expect people to understand it or agree with how I feel about it. I don't expect people to understand or accept me for the decisions I have made for myself. But know that I will never again regret any decision I make regarding my path and I will never let anyone stand in the way of doing the things that I have been called to do.

Qui-Gon was right... it is a hard life, but I'm finding out who I am.

Honor

Recently, I completed my first reading of Forrest Morgan's book, "Living the Martial Way". I say "first reading" because it is a book I plan to re-read periodically. To those of you who recommended that the book be added to the Jedi Academy's book list, thank you. Not only did I learn a great deal from it, it also helped me put into words many things I understood, but didn't know how to explain.

Chief among the latter was the concept of warrior honor. I had always defined honor more or less as integrity. That definition is close, but is not quite sufficient; the concepts are in some sense parallel, but they aren't the same.

Morgan defines honor as being based on three interdependent concepts: obligation, justice, and courage. Of the three, obligation is probably the most foreign to modern westerners. It is best described in terms of the Japanese concept of *giri*, or "right reason". When someone does something for you, you become obligated to him or her; the Japanese would say that you carry that person's *on*, or burden. Repaying the person, thus relieving you of the burden, is *giri*.

It is important to be careful whom one becomes obligated toward, however. If obligation is the root of honor, justice is its heart. Morgan defines justice simply as "knowing the difference between right and wrong and doing right", which admittedly is a bit vague. The important thing where honor is concerned is that no obligation fulfilled is actually honorable if the act of fulfilling it creates injustice.

Courage is the most obvious of the three tenets, and the one most often associated with honor, even in the minds of people who don't understand the other two. Moral courage, the fortitude it takes to do what is right no matter the personal cost, is the form of courage most often called on in every warrior's life. In general, a warrior would analyze all of his actions to see what obligations are being met, for the justice of the action, and would then use courage to act appropriately.

Once explained, Morgan's definition of warrior honor seems fairly straightforward, but consider the implications. Since obligations are burdens to repay something that someone else has done, one cannot have an obligation to oneself. This in turn means that there is no honor in acts done for oneself. Although this doesn't mean that such acts are dishonorable, it does mean that they can be neutral at best. One should remember, however, that one cannot meet one's obligations unless one takes care of oneself.

It should also be understood that because the martial skills warriors practice makes them potentially dangerous, they have an obligation to society to exercise self control, restraining them from abusing their skills to tyrannize weaker members of society. With great power comes greater responsibility.

At this point, one may be wondering what this entire means for modern day Jedi, not all of whom are necessarily warriors in the martial sense. I feel that Jedi should be honorable, using this definition, for much the same reason warriors are. You see, the concept of

honor (which Morgan claims is common to all warrior groups, regardless of culture) came about from very pragmatic reasons. Since a warrior without honor could easily become a tyrant, it is only honorable warriors that society can trust in positions of power.

While non-martial Jedi may not be physically dangerous, being a Jedi sets one apart from the crowd. Since Jedi seek to become the most they can become, they are in some sense "stronger" than the average person who wastes much of his or her potential. Again, with great power comes greater responsibility. Society will only trust Jedi with a strong sense of honor.

Gray Side in the Context of the Code

Over 2 decades ago, in a galaxy that we live in, there was a movie that came out. It was called Star Wars. A fantasy tale taking place in a highly advanced technological setting (though by some of the clothing some people wore, it would be hard to tell), the movie would capture the imaginations of the audience, span into a trilogy, and a much later arrived prequel, billions of dollars worth of merchandise, and tons of fans calling themselves Jedi and forming sites much like this one.

Star Wars became very popular, and spanned many books, video games comics, and inevitably for the people who wanted to be Jedi, RPG's. There were actually two to come out...the one that has recently been put out is not the first one. I forgot the name of the company that produced the first one...when I remember, and if anyone cares, I'll let you know.

Now, the guys who made the original RPG knew quite a bit about the minds of the people who play such things...after all, it was their business. They knew that of all the people who were going to want to play as Jedi (and there would be a lot), there would be basically 3 types of people:

Those who wanted to be the virtuous Knights, and would play the part through and through.

Those who really wanted to abuse the Force powers choke fools and those with a lack of faith, and fry people up with that cool Force lightning.

Those that wanted to have their cake and eat it too.

Now, for the first two groups, it was easy setting up their class system. It was a no brainer: give the good guys the Jedi class and set it up accordingly, and give the bad guys the Sith class, and set that up accordingly. But what about the third group? You KNEW that there would be people going to game masters and saying "Well, I want to be a Jedi, they're the hero's and they're cool with lightsabers and the Force and stuff, I'm down with that. But Dark Lightning is cool man. Any way I can get that?" or "Do I really have to go to the

dark side just cause I'm angry at this guy for wiping out my team and slicing him to finely cut deli meat?"

Thus, the game makers came up with a solution. Enter the Gray Jedi, the guys who are "in between", the guys who work with the "light" while playful courting the "dark". The guys who try to have the whole buffet table. Problem solved, books went to print, and money was made.

Their brainchild not only made things easier and interesting game wise, it also spawned countless debates in game shops and internet forums everywhere, terms such as the "Gray Way" and "Shadow Jedi", and the erroneous belief that while "light" Jedi are goodie two shoes, Grey Jedi "do what they have to".

Thus the origins of the "Gray Jedi". If you all don't believe me, I'll find the original source book for you guys and post the page up. I know it exists because I read it, and to this day I regret not buying the thing.

Now, this doesn't really make the whole Gray Jedi thing any less "valid" than the other stuff (not unless you want to get into canon...after all Lucas never mentions anything about "Gray Jedi"...not once), because in the end, all of this is just a lot of philosophy based on someone else's ideas...as well as a character class made up in an old RPG that's turned into something of a Frankenstein's monster. The fact of the matter is, if this stuff wasn't made up by someone else, many of you guys wouldn't be here now discussing it.

It's really hilarious to see people arguing over how great their "way" is, or that they are defending their way and beliefs...when you think about it, it really isn't your way. I mean, if you had a particular path before you came here, and you simply just interchanged Jedi terminology with what you were actually working to be, like a Taoist, or some kind of spiritual warrior, or something, that's one thing. But if you're just taking a lot of stuff that was made up for 4 (soon to be 5 then 6) movies and an RPG, without something that you live day to day, in real life, don't you think that arguing all this adamantly as your "way of life", is just a bit, oh I don't know, bombastically idiotic?

I can't say it isn't entertaining however. You get to seem some really funny posts by people, witty lines, and a few well crafted insults, not to mention some really good posts on the subject dotted in and out of these threads. Still though, Einstein was right about one thing:

"Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former."

Let me just make one thing clear: I really don't care what you call yourself. Jedi, Sith, Grey, Shadow, droid, Dark Emperor, St. Dogbert...I couldn't care less. The only thing that concerns me when you come here is if you really are growing, and how you truly act. Labels are one thing, but what is what is. You can't change that. This arguing labels thing and saying "my label can beat up your label", "you don't know what my label is", is

ridiculous. Gray Jedi, Light Jedi, Dark Jedi, light beer, dark beer, root beer...please. Just drink it and shut up.

There is much too much I can say on this topic, but I don't have the time, or the desire to do that now. Suffice to say there is a whole lot of confusion, egotism, and stupidity strewn about this particular topic and it's nothing new. Please people; let's not turn this into some kind of religion, with people like Muslims and Christians arguing on either side of the fence, while the Jewish label both stupid. Later on just like religions we're going to have little subgroups in the major groups: Born Again Light Sider's, Palpatine Witnesses, the Church of Qui-Gon of Lucus Day Saints. We already got some people believing people like us are in a cult; we don't need to give them more ammunition. Just do what works for you, know the ins and outs of it to make sure it's good for you, and really know about what another so called "way" is before opening your mouth about it, much less make it "your way." And then Live it. If it works, fine, if not, find something better and shut up.

Ok, that was pretty much it. After that it addressed other issues that aren't important right now.

Personally, I think the Jedi code essay I recently put up helps pretty much to dispel the "goodie-two shoes vs. Gray/Shadow Jedi" myth that I keep hearing. Notice too, that in the code it talks about serving the Force...not the Light side of the Force, just the Force. That's also something to take into consideration.

Also, to throw in something else, I hear about Gray Jedi not denying their emotions, or using them, unlike "Light" Jedi who try to be emotionless. This stems from a misunderstanding about what it's meant by acting without emotion.

We are human beings. Human beings are emotional beings. Therefore, it is impossible be totally emotionless and be human. Once you lose all emotions, a part of you dies. Those without emotions usually don't function well in some parts of life.

So Jedi are capable of emotion. The key here lies in *not* letting emotions control them. They have to be in control of their emotions, not the other way around.

No matter what you may think, any emotion clouds whatever you are doing. Those who are ecstatic see rainbows all day, and their actions will reflect this. Those who are angry will see in red, and will find confrontation anywhere, something to tear apart, and their acts will convey this. These things cloud whatever is actually in front of them. There are certain things that you will not see when immersed in any emotions. Those who are extremely happy will hardly notice the homeless on the ground; it's a beautiful day. Those who are enraged won't notice the quaint beauty in the child's drawing on the fridge. Those whose minds are clear will be able *to see what's in front of them*. That's what

acting without emotions means. It is a way to keep your mind clear so you can see what's in front of you and act accordingly.

Hammering Down the Uneven Peg

There is a beautiful saying that the Japanese have: "The uneven peg will be hammered down."

They use this in reference to their social mores. The Japanese have a rigorous social structure and expectations for performance and interactions. This saying is used especially in elementary school, where children learn what is expected of them in their society.

You might think that this "hammering down" refers to use of punishments we generally resort to: verbal punishments, spankings, etc.

yet this is not the case. Those ways of punishment are the way of resistance; they are the way of confrontation, and of interaction. Such ways are hard and often fruitless. They may go on for months and months with no real effect.

So how do you think this adage is applied?

Ostracization.

There are times, it's true, when "ignore it and it will go away" merely is putting your head in the sand. And yet, there are other times when it is a most powerful tool.

To apply this adage, the unwanted behavior is scorned. The teachers turn their back on the students, ignore the behavior, and do not respond to it. They do this in unison, as a group. For if only one or two people do it, while the rest give the behavior any regard, then the "hammering" will fail.

I hope you have all understood this very important lesson. To not regard someone in the least sends a powerful message. It is one of the greatest techniques you can learn. I encourage you to think before you reply to things, and see if this hammering might not be a better method of dealing with a malcontent poster.

Courage to Run Away

Many of us are so conditioned by television and movies that we cannot conceive of simply turning tail and running for our lives as any sort of "honorable" fighting strategy. And yet I've studied under some brilliant, brave, honorable sensei -- every one of whom has stressed running from danger as a perfectly respectable fighting technique.

Now, in the movies we never see Chuck Norris, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Steven Segal,

or ANY hero running away. No matter what the odds, even if they're outnumbered 30 to one, even if the bad guys have guns -- the hero stays, he fights, and he wins. Problem is, that's the movies. Somebody WROTE a script which says the hero will win, and all those "bad guys" are professional stuntmen hired to MAKE SURE the hero wins.

Karate, and for that matter ALL martial arts, are basically a form of science -- science of the mechanics of the body, and science of the mind. They also all employ the science of strategy -- and invariably good old-fashioned common sense.

Almost from my first class, sensei have told me that there is NOTHING noble about getting the crap kicked out of you in order to show you're tough. That "tough guy, take it like a man" attitude in a dojo invariably results in much laughter, and comments to the effect that allowing yourself to get beat up only shows that you're stupid.

Right about now, I suspect that some of you are saying: "I could never do anything that cowardly." But courage and cowardice are very relative terms. Who would think you a coward? The gang of punks who've jumped you so they can have four-to-one odds in the fight? Are they acting brave? And quite frankly, what do you CARE what a punk, or a bunch of punks, thinks?

Street fighting isn't like in the movies. It's so vicious that you can WIN and still carry away permanent scars or injuries.

I guess the bottom line is this: Do you possess the courage to employ the strategy of running away? Or are you such a coward that you would stay and let yourself be murdered just so some punks who don't know the meaning of the word honor won't think you're a chicken?

And, if you want a Star Wars analogy, in the opening of Episode One, Qui-Gon and Obi-wan ran from the spaceship and escaped to the planet. Apparently to Jedi, running away and living to win the war is more important than a pointless death.

I asked Carl Henning, a man who readily talked not only of great victories but also of running like crazy to save his life, if there was ever a time when honor would require you to stay and fight to the death. He thought a moment, and then said yes, if you were with your wife or children. Under that situation, Carl said you wouldn't want to save your life if the cost was something you couldn't bare to live with. Then, he said, fight honorably, and as hard and viciously as you can.

Going with the Flow

As many of you know, this is my first lecture in several months. I have had time off for reflection after my resignation from the Jedi Council. This first returning lecture is an attempt to voice some insights into the Force that I have learned during my time of seclusion.

The Force, it has been said, is like a river, flowing through all things, being the energy

that makes up existence, that sustains life. Students and adepts of the Force are inclined to attempt to learn to harness and control the Force, first and foremost. Throughout my studies of the Force, I too have had the goal of learning more about the Force in order to harness it, to use it to the greatest possible extent. But I realized that to harness the Force is, in many ways, to cheapen it, to lessen it from an all-encompassing knowledge and awareness of Life to just a tool to be used for whatever purposes a Force adept may desire. Simply attempting to harness the Force is, in many ways, a path walked by the blind. In truth, there is no harnessing the Force... because the Force is that which flows through and around us.

It is my experience that nowhere is the Force felt so strongly, so purely as in nature. Consider the rock. It has mass - weight lent it by the earth's gravitational pull. It also has kinetic energy. A rock may lay motionless, or depending upon the force exerted on it, it may be propelled, thus becoming a moving object. The rock is at one with the Force because of one simple reason... it is made up of the Force. The rock is a product of the Force, and is therefore constantly in harmony with the ebb and flow of the Force.

Human beings, however, generally exist in opposition to the Force. We are part of the Force, but are constantly diverted from the path we are destined to walk, by our own lack of balance. The most experienced adept of the Force can really have no more true understanding of the Force than the above-mentioned rock possesses. In fact one might say that the rock has an advantage because the rock merely exists made up of, and empowered by, the Force. For the rock, there is no "why", or "how", or even "when" or "where". The rock just IS.

The major revelation that I had in my seclusion is that in my quest of learning to use the Force, to control it, I had begun to neglect the fact that I already KNEW the Force... it is existence, it is Life and encompasses the nature of things. I took a cue from the rock... it is not necessarily the usage of the Force that is important, but the harmony that we have with it, that makes our connection with the Force strong. Yes, a Jedi can learn to divert that stream of the Force to achieve certain goals; however, this diversion accomplishes comparatively little since it realizes only a small percentage of the true potential of the Force. In other words, the whole of a stream possesses much more energy than just a little rivulet of water. Rather than divert a portion of water to achieve our task, it is better for us to bring our task into the stream, and be able to work with it more handily. Many Force adepts have it backwards. It is not necessary to reach out to clutch the Force, to grasp the little bit your hands can reach. Why settle for a handful when you can open your whole self to the flow and become a conduit for the free-flowing Force energy rather than merely a dispenser?

In summary, In order to use the Force, one must first flow with the Force. In order to flow with the Force one must first learn to be part of it... learn to come to peace with existence, and the nature of existence. A Jedi does not fear death, a Jedi knows only existence, and the value of affecting the living world through existence. One must come into balance with nature and into balance with the Force, before learning to use and control the Force. Only by flowing with the Force does a student truly comprehend the

Path of the Jedi. A Force Adept must not simply seek to use the Force as a tool, but rather be a tool of the Force, and flow with the stream as it flows in, through and around us, around all things.

I would, of course, like to clarify some of my ideas. The harmony in the force which I address in this lecture is not the same harmony of which the Shadow Jedi speak. I simply speak of truly becoming knowledgeable about the Force by the mere act of being. It is powerful indeed to go out and affect people's lives, helping at the Food Bank, volunteering to help those less fortunate, etc. These are all things that would amount to using a 'fraction' of the Force, not the whole. These are wonderful things, and are the hallmark of a true Jedi. My point is simply that to use the FULL force, we allow it to encompass us, and encompass our lives. If we stay at home and lead a normal life, and have brief flashes of goodwill, then we are using part of the Force, and not using the full amount of the Force. But if we allow the Force to fully envelop us, the Force is evident in all our actions, and instead of using flashes of the Force occasionally, we use the full power of the Force in all things. A Jedi does not need charity to do good, we use the simple act of being to have a positive effect on the world.

Destiny and Freewill

I. Destiny - Is there a plan and purpose for the world, for Creation, for life?

To answer this, we must address this much like a Geometry theorem and prove this as a postulate. Let's start with our Given: a Creative Power does exist, which is itself uncreated and eternal. Which is possessed of intelligence and foresight. Belief in this is essential in order to move forward.

Proof #1 - Nature. Nature moves in set cycles and follows set natural and physical laws which govern it. Each living thing on earth has its own set lifespan and is interdependent upon the others. Plants pollinate, sprout and grow, to be eaten by herbivores, which are then preyed upon by carnivores. The planets spin on their axes in set formations, at precise angles, which never vary. The stars go through life cycles of their own, and the Cosmic Dance has a set pattern of steps.

Proof #2 - Evolution as taught in schools, namely macroevolution, or the "Big Bang theory" among other things, is highly improbable. This can be proven by an extensive treatise on physics and biochemistry (see yfiles.com if you want some neat papers on this). However, for reasons of brevity, let's just say that the odds against the Big Bang theory are not just long, but astronomical. Evolution maintains that the purpose of all life is to evolve from its present state into something more advanced and more able to survive. To that end, life picks up and adapts survival mechanisms which may have been discovered and developed, and passes them genetically to each generation. Correct? Yes, on a limited scale. Microevolution occurs quite often within a species, allowing for growth and adaptability. We see some interesting mutations in order for certain species to survive in certain areas or environments. The Creative Power set things up, for example, so that lions remain lions, but lions might, if they lived on snow-covered mountains,

develop a thicker coat and a white camouflage coat. Look at the wonderful diversity of human beings, from the dark-skinned African, whose increased melanin (dark skin) allows for optimal sun exposure, to the stocky Eskimo whose slow metabolism and relatively high fat ratio allow survival in the bitter cold. However, all life sticks to the templates, and stays interdependent upon each other. We see no cross-breeding of species in any branch of biology. All things in nature remain in balance, and act according to their set function, i.e. lions hunt, kill and eat prey. This is not chance, not coincidence. This is the product of an omniscient, far-sighted Intelligence which planned all things before actually bringing them into existence.

Proof #3 - Why human beings? Why us? Face it, you run into people everywhere you go. No escaping that. So why are we here? Every culture has a Creation myth. Each culture has predominant philosophies to explain the fact - but these are only parts of the story. Let's look at the nature of this Creative Power. Why would the universe be created as it has been? Well, not to bring religion into it, but looking at the relationships between human beings, we can see that one fundamental need of humanity is a need for love, companionship and a return of love given. One philosophy states that the Creative Power was lonely and wanted companions. To that end, human beings were made in the that image, each with a spark of the Creative Power in them. And to human beings was given the task of populating the earth and being good stewards of creation - that is, using it wisely.

Proof #4 - Creative power. If you doubt the power of our words, look at what effect a compliment produces on a sullen, sad person. They smile and brighten immediately. OK, perhaps not much, but the change is there. Or look at what hurt and damage a cutting, sarcastic remark can cause. If you doubt the power of our dreams, look at the Taj Mahal, or the Statue of Liberty. Or at the public library system Andrew Carnegie established. If you doubt the power of our deeds, look at what civilizations human hands have wrought over the centuries from natural resources, hard work, and determination. Again, we each have a spark of Creative Power within us. We come to earth to co-create with the Creative Power to bring about that which has been fashioned on the spiritual plane into existence here on the physical. Each of us has a set Plan, a purpose, for our lives. We come to earth to learn, to grow, to experience, and to develop spiritually. To that end, we choose our genetic characteristics, our families and friends, our challenges and obstacles and so forth. In other words, we are creating ourselves as well as the world around us.

II. Free Will - Don't we make our own choices?

OK, so we have a set reason for our existence, and a specific purpose in our lives. And Creation follows an overall plan. Why all the foul-ups? We have read the Holocrons. And we have found out a little bit about each other at the Force Academy, and in our day-to-day lives? Why do some people learn and grow from their challenges, their pain, their experiences, and others allow their pain and hatred to fester and grow, eventually consuming them?

To answer this, we must look again at the spark of Creative Power within us. This

Creative Power includes the power of choice. All life is a series of choices, and the progress of our lives depends on the consequences of the choices we make. Look at the template of our lives as a tree. There are many branches and many leaves on the tree - many ways in which to get to the top, but the tree grows in the same general direction, and remains a tree, no matter what part of it you happen to be looking at at any point in your climb.

This choice - consequence phenomena, or if A then B, follows a law, not of physics, but of the spiritual. Like attracts like. Our words and actions create energy, which can be either positive or negative. The energies we create attract like energies to it, and to us. You see this in the kind of people we attract around us. Positive intentions and thoughts attract positive energies, and positive people - and great works can be accomplished. Likewise the opposite is true. We have all seen people in the paralyzing grip of negative energies such as fear and depression which stifle any action they might take for change. Many philosophies and schools of thought recognize the importance of INTENTION in our words and actions, in order to achieve a desired effect.

Likewise, like spreads like. This is also known as the ripple effect. Our words and actions create negative and positive energies. These spread outward and impact others, who in their turn spread and impact, and so forth. Each act of kindness, love, joy and so forth we do touches another, who in turn shows kindness to others, and so on and on. Likewise, an act of anger, hurt, aggression, fear and so on spreads pain and hurt to others, who spread it to others in their turn. You may have heard the statement "The dog kicks the dog kicks the dog..." This is certainly true.

Each of us has the power to stop the spread of the ripples, to change and redirect the flow of energy. This can be done by countering an act of negative energy with one of positive energy, or vice versa. We learn in chemistry that opposite polarities neutralize each other. However, in the spiritual realm, and on this plane, the energies balance each other, and they carry lessons to their creators. We can show others the power of love, agape, by living this love. Not easy, but very effective when done in a proper manner using the three branches in balance. Likewise, we can learn much from someone who does us a hurt by studying them, studying their motivations, understanding where they are coming from and working with them through compassion (not pity, but active, caring compassion) to help them to learn, grow and even heal. To spread the light of the Jedi to all around us.

III. Faith

Believe it or not, this concept is what ties destiny and free will together. We all accept the fact that there is a Force, which cannot be accessed through the five senses. There is no actual scientific proof that the Force exists, yet it is a palpable reality to all Force adepts. Not all people can feel the Force, and for those who cannot feel or sense the Force, the Force does not exist. Faith is the belief in something that cannot be proven. Faith is trusting that there is a Plan and purpose for our lives. Think of the Plan again operating in our lives as a tree. Each decision that you make is a branch on the tree. The tree remains a tree (the basic template for your life) but the branches of free will provide you with an

infinite number of ways of exploring that tree and evolving.

Along with faith goes intention. We choose to have faith, just as we choose everything else that we do, everything else that we are, in our lives. If you say "I choose to be a Jedi" and have faith in your Path to reveal itself, and have faith in yourself to do the necessary work and growth, to meet the necessary challenges, that is good. However, if you do not have the proper intentions - a desire to help others, a desire to learn and to grow, to seek knowledge for its own sake and not just to earn a title or a rank - all else is lost. You have heard the statement "You are what you eat" many times. Likewise, you are what you THINK - what you believe yourself to be.

It is important to mention that, while faith and the accompanying intention are needed to progress, all that is really required to start down the Path is an open mind and a willingness to explore and suspend disbelief until you can "prove" to yourself that the Force is "real" (subjectively at least). Many people who start on the spiritual path with a very healthy cynicism and questioning attitude have to get knocked back on their heels a few times before any faith develops. The Universe has a tendency to regard skeptics with amusement.

The path a Jedi follows can be long, lonely and often extremely difficult. At times you will feel unbearable pain and extreme fear. You may become depressed at times. You will come to a point where you must face and accept your Dark Side and your weaknesses as well as your strengths. You will come to a deeper knowledge of yourself than you thought possible. This is not meant to scare you. Only to instruct. No matter what the obstacles we face, the end result remains the same. To get to our goal, we must face and get past the obstacles. And faith is the ultimate tool to allow us to do this successfully.

May the Force be with you, and may you rest in the love and care of the Divine.

Loyalty

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

-Margaret Mead

One of the greatest attributes of human nature that seems to be leaving us altogether is loyalty. There was once a time in which we bought our goods, did our jobs, and lived our lives based on this principle. I do not want what I am saying to be in any way misconstrued. I am not advocating going back to 'the good old days.' There is no such creature. I do, however, believe very strongly that we as an organization need to abide by principles that go beyond the boundaries of religion, common decency, or even desire to

help our neighbor, whether that neighbor is right next door, or thousands of miles away and communicating to us by computer.

Loyalty is a big commodity these days. There are courses taught to big business on how to make loyal customers and loyal employees. There are cards that grocery stores use to track customer loyalty and buying habits. There are professional speakers who will speak to organizations and business on the importance of loyalty. The incredible thing is, all of this loyalty that they speak of is loyalty that will hopefully result in personal gain of the person paying the bill. The most ironic thing of all is that most of these organizations WOULD have loyal customers and loyal employees if THEY were loyal to their customers and employees. Where loyalty for personal gain is concerned, yes, the saying is true: what goes around certainly does come around.

So, what is so important about loyalty? Josiah Royce once said, "Unless you can find some sort of loyalty, you cannot find unity and peace in your active living." In many ways, loyalty is the crown jewel of everything we hold dear. It crosses all boundaries, transcends all philosophies, and in the end, is one of the strongest foundational bases for all ethical belief systems. I would like to consider three areas of loyalty: loyalty to ourselves, loyalty in relationships and loyalty to commitments.

Before we can begin to comprehend what it means to be loyal to others, we must first know and understand loyalty to ourselves. There is a life-long progression that takes place to develop this. These steps follow us through our life and at times are present alone, and at times are present together. At times one aspect is prominent over others, and at times they are fairly well balanced. As the cares of life come as bumps in the road, our reactions to them can often result in a change in the aspects of personal loyalty.

First, our basic human needs must be met. We need shelter, food, warmth, someone to love, etc. Obviously, from birth this aspect is always with us. Secondly, after basic needs, our views are important to us. Generally, our views will be a matter of personal loyalty at first in ways that conform to a chosen standard. This chosen standard can be a religion, a philosophy or adamant stand against a chosen set of conforming beliefs. It is ironic that those who fight the battle for the non-traditional and non-conforming end up 30 years later with traditions and philosophies all their own. Thirdly, after basic needs and basic beliefs are met, generally we seek to branch out and determine those areas in which we can find unique slants and make our mark on the world.

Loyalty in relationships means considering the needs, beliefs and unique qualities of those who have a special place in our lives. Woodrow Wilson once said: Loyalty means nothing unless it has at its heart the absolute principle of self-sacrifice. Wow, here is the zinger! It would seem then that this would contradict that fact that we have a loyalty to ourselves. So, how is this not the case? Balance. We must balance our need to be loyal to our own needs, desires, views and unique qualities with those with whom our lives are woven.

This is particularly true of the relationship of marriage. I have often heard it put this way.

Marriage is not a 50/50 relationship; it is a 100/100 relationship. Each member brings their whole self into it and has full partnership in the relationship. While we cannot say the same of brother/sister or child/parent relationships, many of the principles still apply. In considering our loyalty in relationships, we can first consider the emotional bond that brings us together in life. In some cases, as in marriage, or long-term domestic relationships, these bonds are chosen. In others, such as our biological families, these are formed from our early stages of development. Let me just say here, that I realize that we all come from different backgrounds and I want to be very sensitive to the fact that not all chosen or biological relationships have had an outcome that fostered a strong emotional bond. It is unfortunate when acts of violence and sexual abuse force us to break this emotional bond. I feel very strongly for those who have been through an experience such as this and do not mean to indicate that one MUST have a relationship with an abusive parent, spouse or other family member. The purpose of this talk is not to draw out specific examples, but to make us all aware of the basic principles of loyalty and how it is played out in our lives.

The second step after the emotional bond is the functional role that the person plays in our life. Obviously, throughout different stages of our lives, different people will have the most important role. For example, when we are children, our parents may take the most important role. When we marry, our spouse may take the most important role, and so on. Here is where this gets a little confusing. I do not want to confuse what I am saying here about loyalty with another dynamic in our lives-- incentive. Loyalty in this situation says, I am with you, here for you etc., because. And you have to fill in the blank. Incentive says, what's in it for me? Let's not get the two confused. As we look at these two levels of loyalty in our relationships, we can see that there is the potential for both 'absolute' loyalty and loyalty that is merely for our own convenience. The balance then, must be to determine the percentage of self-sacrifice to that of looking out for our own interests. And there may be times in which giving in to the other person will actually have an outcome that serves the higher good better in the long run.

The third area that we must consider is loyalty to commitment. What is really the core here is honesty and integrity, with both others and ourselves. Integrity means trying even if you think you have failed. It means, giving your all even when that is difficult to do. It means doing what is right and decent and fair, even when everyone else has given up on those virtues. Honesty means seeking to live by the truth no matter where that truth leads us. It means being truthful to self and others. Loyalty to commitment - what DOES it mean? I often hear in my line of work a statement from people that goes something like this: 'X number of years ago I could come into your bank and ask for a loan and the officer would fill out a piece of paper and I would go to the teller and get the cash. Now, we have to go through all this red tape.' Others put it this way: I can remember a time when a handshake meant something. My dear friends, that red tape is the thermometer that gauges our health as a people, a wider community. Something has changed in recent years and it has not just been the underwriting policies at banks. Loyalty to our commitments is such an important aspect of this, because it affects us all. I hear people so often state, What happens behind closed doors between two people has no effect on me.

I am not here to promote any particular set of values, virtues or beliefs. However, I will say this. The way we as members of the human race carry out our loyalty to commitment, the way we exercise our honesty and integrity DOES have rippling effects on all of us. We see it in the banking example above. It could easily be stated that both sides of that handshake have changed. We see it in the high prices in stores to make up for those who steal. And we see it in the "dumbing down" of our society as more and more turn away from their commitments to what they believe, and turn away from entertainment that fosters beauty and the arts. Instead, they turn toward tabloid magazines and television shows like Jerry Springer, which always take us to the lowest common denominator, rather than lifting us up to higher standards. We as a society, a culture, and a world lie to ourselves if we feel we can continually subject ourselves to that in the name of entertainment and maintain loyalty, honesty and integrity.

As we move into this new century and new millennium, let us make a commitment to bring back to its rightful place this important principle, loyalty. For many, these ideas will stretch us out of our comfort zone. However, to do great things we must think and act like great people. I have heard it put this way, There are no traffic jams on the extra mile. I close with this: Madison Sarratt, former president of Vanderbilt University once said, "Today I am going to give you two examinations, one in trigonometry and one in honesty. I hope you will pass them both, but if you must fail one, let it be trigonometry, for there are many good people in this world today who cannot pass an examination in trigonometry, but there are no good people in the world who cannot pass an examination in honesty." Loyalty to our commitments means being honest with ourselves, and doing the right thing about it.

Eastern Wisdom

The Sakya ("gray earth") school is one of the four major branches of Tibetan Buddhism, named after the Sakya Monastery founded in 1073. Of the five great Sakya guru-lamas who lived in Tibet between 1092 and 1280, Sakya Pandita's erudition embraced all worldly and religious disciplines. His translations of early Buddhist texts from the Sanskrit made him known in India and also Mongolia, where one of the grandsons of Genghis Khan, Altan Kahn, invited Sakya Pandita to visit him. The efforts of Sakya Pandita to teach the Khan (and the Mongols) Buddhist philosophy, ethics and logic were so successful that the Khan conferred rulership of all Central Asia upon the Sakya school in 1249.

Sakya Pandita's "A Jewel Treasury of Good Advice" is one of his most important works. It has been called a "profound, down-to-earth, and practical guide to the art of living as a wise and good human being." Numerous Tibetans have drawn from it inspiration and guidance in the conduct of their lives. It has been extensively studied by scholars and has become one of the most highly valued texts by all the Buddhist traditions of Tibet.

Salutation to the Buddha

The supreme gods, the naga kings, adepts, knowledge holders,
The great ascetics Akshapada and Balmiki, and so forth,
All paid homage with pleasing bejeweled crown ornaments:
So also we prostrate to the omniscient leader of sentient beings.

When analysis is done right, gaining excellence
through all temporal deeds and proper spiritual methods
Corresponds to how the sages practice;
this teaching is (thus) "A Jewel Treasury of Good Advice."

Ordinary Wisdom
Sakya Pandita's Treasury of Good Advice

An Examination of the Wise

1

The wise who nourish a treasury of good qualities
Gather to themselves precious good advice.
The great ocean is a treasury of rivers
To which all running waters descend.

2

People may or may not be knowledgeable, but
The wise are judicious in what to do and what to avoid.
A magnetic stone is able to extract
Iron filings that are mixed in with dust.

3

Skilled in good advice, the wise know,
But foolish people do not.
When the radiance of the sun appears,
Owls become blind.

4

The wise can eradicate faults,
But the foolish cannot.
The garuda (colorful one!) can kill poisonous snakes,
But crows cannot.

5

When the very wise become destitute
Their intelligence grows even stronger.
When the king of beasts becomes hungry
It swiftly attacks the elephant's head.

6

Until the learned are thoroughly questioned,
Their depth cannot be assessed.
Until a drum is beaten by drumsticks,
Its distinction from other drums is unknown.

7

Even if one is to die the next morning, today one must study.
Though one may not become a sage in this life,
Knowledge is safely deposited for future lives,
Just as riches safely deposited can later be reclaimed.

8

When a person possesses good qualities,
Others spontaneously gather around.
The fragrant flower may be distant,
But bees are drawn like gathering clouds.

9

A single wise person who has fully developed
All good qualities illumines the earth.
But the mean-spirited, like stars,
Even when numerous, cannot illuminate.

10

Although the wise have immeasurable learning,
They still embrace the lesser knowledge of others.
By means of continuously practicing thus,
They quickly proceed to omniscience.

11

Though enemies are numerous, when the wise
Are protected by wisdom, how can they be harmed?
Single-handedly, the Brahmin boy of Ujjayini Triumphed over an entire assembly of foes.
(Note: the boy used his ingenuity to become King, and
his period of rule was called "Protection by the One of Wisdom.")

12

When offensive talk from small minds creates quarrels,
The wise skillfully restore harmony.
The river's turbulence muddies the water,
But the sparkling water-jewel purifies it.

13

Howsoever the wise become destitute,

They do not take the path of fools.
Even if thirsty, birds who crave rain
Will not drink water fallen to the ground.

14

Even if the wise are deceived,
They are not confused about what they do.
Although ants are sightless,
They are speedier than creatures with eyes.

15

When two wise people engage in discussion,
Further worthy wisdom can arise.
By mixing turmeric with borax,
Another color is produced.

16

The noble wise ones who have gathered merit
Will be victorious over all, even if they stand alone.
The lion, king of beasts, and universal monarchs
Have no need of allies for their rule.

17

When skilled in method, why should it be hard
To employ even the great as servants?
The garuda, though very powerful
Is ridden by the golden-clad one.

18

Wisdom is what achieves happiness
In both this and future lives.
Prince Candrar's wisdom protected King Sudasa
In his lifetime and in those to come.

19

Though people may be very brave and strong,
Without wisdom they cannot become heroes.
Though people may become wealthy,
Without virtues how can their wealth endure?

20

Distinct good and bad are clear to all,
But the wise distinguish them when mixed
Anyone can take milk from the cow,
But swans separate milk from water.

The Eight-Fold Path

Here is the Eightfold Path:

1. Correct understanding. Without a proper understanding of the nature of our problems we are lost. It is essential that we look deeply into our motives and needs.
2. Correct thinking. Much of what passes for thought is in fact preconception and misunderstanding based on prejudice. To think properly demands objectivity and a settled purpose to achieve a solution.
3. Correct speech. It is essential to refrain from unkind gossip and lying and to cultivate ways of communication which are constructive and creative.
4. Correct conduct. To avoid being destructive, cruel and dishonest, we must live up to our promises, do what we say we will and act in such a way that the world benefits.
5. Correct vocation. To harm others by one's occupation or to take advantage of them is destructive. In our day, with so much harm being done to the environment by careless, heedless ways of living, it's hard to say what the correct vocation is, but each person should consider their carefully.
6. Correct effort. This is the energy and will to get on with one's work, not be deflected more than one can help, and to be constant in one's determination to tread the path.
7. Correct alertness. The goal of this step is to cultivate proper attention and awareness so that one is in control of one's actions. It is capturing the attention and bringing it to bear on what is happening now, at this moment, without memories and anticipations to cloud the scene, so that one sees things as they really are in a sharp and clear consciousness.
8. Correct concentration. This is practiced during meditation. It is a form of mind training in which thought is persuaded to die down altogether and a tranquil one-pointedness is encouraged, which is usually accompanied by feelings of joy and well being. Then these feelings themselves are allowed to die away so that all that remains is a clear transcendent awareness.

<i>These steps lead to insight into one's fundamental nature, said the Buddha, and they bring about four sublime states -- benevolence, compassion, joyous sympathy and equanimity.</i> 'Be not afraid of good actions, brethren. It is another name for happiness, for what is desire, beloved, dear and delightful -- this word "good actions".' The eightfold path is the best of all paths, the four truths the best of all truths. Freedom from craving is the best state, and the one who has eyes to see is the best person. This is the noble path, the way which leads to freedom from delusion, to clarity. The one who sees this path and follows it comes to the end of sorrow.

The Four Noble Truths

"Carl Jung once said that almost all the psychological problems brought to him were basically religious ones. People believe that the 'world of the born, created, made and formed' is all there is, and their ignorance of the 'unborn and uncreated' causes them to cling to all that is material, and to drown the hopelessness of this attitude in all sorts of addictions.

In response to this existential dilemma, the Buddha carefully laid out a path of growing awareness which would take the follower as gradually as he or she wished to a deeper understanding of existence. Nothing in this path depends on belief; all can be discovered by the senses, and thus there is no moment at which reassurance is not present.

First he gave four statements about human existence, which are known in Buddhism as the Four Noble Truths. In a similar way to a doctor, he stated first the presence of an illness in humanity; second the nature of that illness; third that it can be cured, and fourth the way to cure it.

These are the Four Noble Truths:

1. Life as we ordinarily live it is often full of unhappiness. As well as the pain of birth, old age, sickness and death, there is separation, grief and despair. At a less intense level there is anger, resentment and frustration, which often fill our minds to the exclusion of anything else.
2. The main cause of such unhappiness is craving -- craving for pleasure, craving for individual existence and craving for release from our present situation.
3. Such craving can be transcended. We can liberate ourselves from the demands of the insatiable ego and find a way of life which leads to a supreme happiness, Nirvana.
4. That way of life consists in eight steps, known in Buddhism as the Eightfold Path.

They who take refuge in the Way and journey with those who follow it, clearly see the four great truths. Suffering, the cause of suffering, the ceasing of suffering and the eightfold path that leads to the end of suffering. Then at last they find safety. They are delivered from suffering and are free."

Earth Force, Martial Arts and Taoism

First, to get "brute force" out of the way, this really isn't a martial arts term. Brute force, in any form, is generally used as an expression for relying upon unthinking physical strength, as opposed to utilizing your mind. It usually has negative implications, implying a lack of intelligence or wits.

To understand Earth Force, you need to have a grasp of Taoism. Tao, meaning "the path " or "the way," is viewed as lying beyond existence AND nonexistence; think of it as the

"Force" behind the Big Bang, and you begin to understand the significance of Tao to those who accept this philosophy.

Earth Force, in Taoism, reflects the Chinese Tao view that the fundamental component of Tao is energy -- Chi or Ki (pronounced Chee or Kee, as I in most Asian languages is sounded as a long E).

This is at the heart of Yin and Yang, the view that the universe is composed of opposite, yet complimentary, forces -- male and female, light and dark, hot and cold, hard and soft, ad infinitum. It is the constant transformations between the separate forces that give the universe being (bet you didn't know a question about Earth Force would lead to something this complicated, did you?!).

Taoists applied this philosophy to the "real world," and came up with a philosophy of "Earth Force," composed of elements. Unlike the Greek philosophers, who developed similar concepts, but from an external perspective, i.e. elements as absolute, static "things"; in Taoism, elements are fluid and multi-dimensional.

The five elements of Tao are: Earth, Water, Fire, Metal and Wood -- quite similar to the early western concepts of elements. However, Tao assigns "natures" to elements (almost like personality traits!), and states that elements react according to their nature. Water, for example, is flowing, moving and changing. It gives us life and yet can extinguish a fire.

I'm sure you've heard of martial arts references to water, and how it is fluid and can adopt any shape as needed. This is an example of Taoistic Earth Force philosophy as it is applied to martial arts. There's more to this philosophy, but I think this at least starts to explain how Earth Force relates to martial arts.

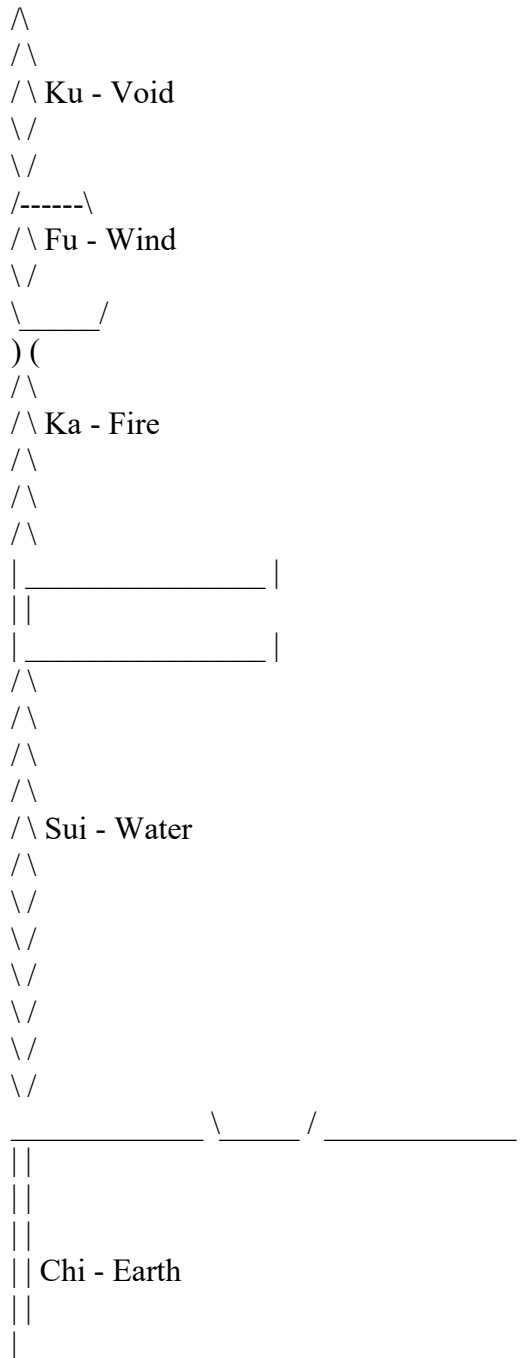
Here are a few quotes that might help:

"Man when living is soft and tender, when dead he is hard and tough... the hard and tough are parts of death; the soft and tender are parts of life... the tree when it is too tough will break. The position of the strong and great is low, and the position of the weak and tender is high." Lao Tzu <

Here's another way of saying this, which I'm sure you've heard, but probably didn't know represented Taoist philosophy:

"A mighty oak tree and a small willow grew side by side. The oak was proud and arrogant, and often insulted the willow, claiming 'I am stout and strong. I yield before no one. You are weak, and bend in the softest breeze.'

"One day a giant wind storm blew across the land, enveloping the two trees. The oak stood solid and unyielding before the wind, but it was too strong for him, and he broke and fell to the ground. But the supple little willow tree bent effortlessly in the face of the wind, and no matter how hard the wind blew, the willow tree bent and flowed with it -- and so the wind had no effect on the willow. In time the wind died down, leaving the willow untouched, and the mighty oak broken and dead."



Shadow Jedi Lectures

Inner Balance

Inner Balance. As Shadows, this is a very basic concept we tend to rely on a lot. But what is it?

To put it simply, it's what happens when the aspects of the self (mind, body, and spirit) work together in harmony. This is where inner balance is derived from, at any rate.

Let's break that down real quick. We may not all agree on this, but the way I see it, there are three basic aspects of the self. There is the mind, which is where thoughts and emotions take place. There's the body, which is totally physical, but responds to stimuli from the mind, acting on thoughts or emotional impulses. And then there's the spirit, or soul, which, in a way, powers the body and the mind. It is my belief, and seems to be the general consensus, that the soul **IS** the true self. We can make these three aspects work together in harmony, or we can go on like we do, keeping them separate.

The key to making these basic aspects work together is developing them at the same time. That is to say, do not neglect the development of one while specializing in the other. I would strongly advise that, if at all possible, one would look into some physical activity. I tend to prefer martial arts, which seems to be predominant, but even tennis, aerobics, or golf would work. Most physical activities like this tend to not only help you develop your physical aspect, but also the mind, through focus and concentration.

The mind can further be developed, obviously, through learning. Pick up a book on philosophy, or some great piece of literature, or even a decent science fiction or fantasy book. Anytime you read, you expand your mind. Or, take a walk through the woods, make observations, and try to learn from that. There are any number of things you can do to work on development of the mind. I know the vast majority of students here are also still in high school or college, but if you're not, I would think that taking a class of some kind would prove enriching.

The spiritual aspect is a little tougher to expand upon, because we all have different beliefs. Some of us are Christian, some are Buddhist, some refuse to affiliate themselves with any religion at all. There is a fundamental difference between religion and spirituality, but that's a discussion for another time. The point is, we all have our own beliefs. Going to your church, your temple, your synagogue...whichever...as long as you get something out of it, instead of going just to be going, you're developing your spiritual side. Meditation also helps quite a bit, and ties in nicely with the development of mental focus.

These are only examples of ways to achieve inner balance. There is no one set way to do it. I can't guarantee you'll immediately recognize inner balance when you find it. It won't make life's problems go away. But it will give you a new perspective on them, and allow you to deal with them more effectively. That is the main purpose of inner balance.

Instead of panicking because some setback has occurred, you should be able to look at it in a less emotional way, and see what you can do about it, or even determine **IF** anything should be done about it. From there, inner balance will lead to external balance.

Reality, Truth, Perception and Balance

This lecture will expound on the first three Ideas of the Shadow Jedi that I wrote. These have to do with Reality, Truth, Perception, and Balance. As we move more into the Ten

Ideas of the Shadow Jedi, I will be expanded this to cover other subjects, such as the Force, Reality Shifts, Universal Energy, and the Ten Statements of a Shadow Jedi. To understand the ideas behind reality, you first must understand what reality is. Reality is not an absolute setting in which everyone exists. Reality is, rather, a simple path, a path which you walk on. It is a path that you pave yourself, as if you are trailblazing. The Universe as we all know it is created by the paths of everyone being mixed together. Every person, every being in the Universe has a slightly different reality. As they have different realities, they have different rules as well. This can make communication difficult. When one person thinks that a plane is a Cessna 152 and one person thinks a plane is a Boeing 747, communication is difficult. To communicate, you must first establish a common set of rules.

Humanity does this by defining our realities in generally similar ways. That is what has created, over the years, this illusion of a unchangeable, fixed reality. In truth, the fixed reality that we refer to is simply the reality of the group, all 6 billion humans on this planet contributing to it. It is generally similar to allow for communication between people of different individual realities. If you alter your individual reality so that it is drastically different from the group reality, then you are seen as insane.

This is because the group reality does not allow the perception of things that are different. Since individual people form the group reality, when you alter your reality you alter the group. This causes others to be able to see your reality, to a limited extent. The more drastically you depart from the established group reality, the less people can experience it. Eventually, you will be the only one who can witness your reality and therefore you are seen as insane.

Since reality is different for all people, truth is a complex illusion. The truth, the almighty god of reason and rhyme that so many people take for granted, is an illusion based in the group reality. There is no truth. If you look carefully, you will see why. Every person has a slightly different reality. Truth is defined by the laws of reality. Since they are different for all people, truth is different for everyone. There is no real truth.

Truth is an illusion created by the human mind in order for it to cope with the idea of a limitless universe in which anything is possible. Everything is possible. Nothing unreal can exist.

Finally, balance. Balance is based upon a variable, reality. Because of the fact that reality is not a set thing, balance also changes depending on what your focus is. This means that no one can successfully force a code of balance on you. Only you can force a code of balance upon yourself, because only you truly experience your reality.

From these conclusions, we can draw the first three statements of a Shadow Jedi.

- 1.) Focus and perception are the ultimate creators of reality.
- 2.) Truth is an illusion created by the human mind in order for it to cope with the idea of a limitless universe in which anything is possible.
- 3.) Balance is an internal measurement of your relationship with your reality.

Unlearning: An Introduction

Welcome to the Shadow. As you read through lectures and posts you may come across familiar ideas and terms. Here is where people tend to gloss over the content, skimming it just to make sure they know what it's about so they can move on to the 'new'

material. The training material here is placed for a reason, mainly that we hope you benefit from what's written down to its full extent.

This, then, is the first lesson you will come across, one that will be a staple for later development. I speak of Unlearning.

People never check on what they 'know', after all, they know it forward and back, what could anything new about it come from? This is something to be avoided, as it closes the mind and hinders the training process.

The other part of Unlearning we look out for is the knowing vs. doing a thing. I can read and understand how a car works, but be completely unable to work on an engine. Book knowledge and working knowledge must be combined if you are to take anything of value away from the information posted here. All concepts, no matter how mundane they may appear, must be given equal attention and seriousness.

This is the point of Unlearning. Unlearning is a two-way lens. For it to work properly it must be used to examine all personal biases, and the limits of what you 'know'. So really the first task is knowing yourself to a deep enough degree that you can recognize some of your more powerful personality traits, so that they can be side stepped should the need arise. After accomplishing the above it will become common practice to be able to approach a topic with a clean slate mentality.

Emotions and Unlearning

Welcome to the Shadow. As you read through lectures and posts you may come across familiar ideas and terms. Here is where people tend to gloss over the content, skimming it just to make sure they know what it's about so they can move on to the 'new' material. The training material here is placed for a reason, mainly that we hope you benefit from what's written down to its full extent.

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Introduction to Meditation

Meditation is an art as old as civilized man. It is used to do anything from relieve pain and heal injuries to add strength, power and even increase consciousness.

It is easy to do and infinitely helpful, making it one of the fastest growing art forms practiced. To do it you need only the bare minimum, yourself, loose-fitting comfortable clothes, a relaxed environment and 15 minutes of free time. It is recommended that you do it for at least 15 minutes and at regular intervals; every morning when you wake up or every evening before you go to bed etc. etc. Try to make it at or around the same time. This puts your body into a routine of knowing that "at this time I'm going to relax and be calm for the next. how ever long".

Right now I'm just going to give you the basics, later on I'll get into more detailed techniques but for right now practice sitting with your eyes closed and try not to focus on anything just let your mind drifts from thought to thought. Do not hold on to any idea simply let it flow. This is a technique called mindfulness. Do not try to control your breathing; normal is always best, and do not get discouraged if you find it difficult. If your mind wanders on it's own, simply bring it back to it's flow and begin again. This usually takes several tries and the beginner normally finds it hard to maintain this state for more than a minute or two without needing to bring it back on track. For now go with what you've got so far and I'll add the next installment soon.

(Editor's note: I will add this: When practicing meditation of any kind, you may start with good posture and your back straight, but do not be alarmed if you start to slump as your body relaxes. Be mindful, of course, because you don't want to end up in a position where breathing is restricted. However, a slight curve in your back is normal as the body relaxes and you slip deeper into a meditative state. You may experience other sensations, such as a slight rocking back and forth, or your arms may feel weightless and sort of float. Unless the sensation is physically unpleasant, simply ride it out and go with it.)

Perspective and Perception

In the quest to understand balance and apply it to life, Shadow Jedi focus on the concepts of perspective & perception. Many people nonchalantly throw around phrases such as "Perception is reality" and "It all depends on your point of view." Shadow Jedi take perspective & perception beyond these cliché statements to a deeper understanding. Just as they go hand-in-hand, the Shadow Jedi must be aware of the two sides to perspective & perception: the self and the world.

Let's begin with the individual's understanding of the "twins." What is perspective? Perspective is the point of reference that a person takes when thinking or doing. Components that are factored into an individual's perspective may be past knowledge, and observation. In a manner of speaking, perspective is the raw data on our world that we take in. Perception is the spin or interpretation made or applied to our perspective. Take the following example as a base, then apply the concepts to your own understanding:

There are many varieties of sit-down restaurants. They vary in being elegant and expensive to practical & affordable. Regardless, there is a general perspective about service--a server should be prompt and courteous taking your order, bring your food (prepared correctly) in a reasonable amount of time. These are the elements of perspective in a dining situation. Perception is applied when the diner makes a

distinction on "how good" the service ought to be. At the more expensive restaurant, one might perceive more attentive service than the expectation one might have for a cheaper establishment. Why is that? It's the interpretation of the situation that leads the patron to have a different point of view.

It is important for the Shadow Jedi to understand his own perspective & perception so that he knows how and why he understands the world as he does. This requires mindfulness, and self-awareness continuously. Yet, though one must pay attention to individual perspective & perception, the Shadow Jedi must also learn to be aware of how this operates simultaneously in other people! How does one go about understanding the perspective & perception in another person? First, though the Shadow Jedi must keep his own "twins" balanced, in this case, he must also be able to transcend them. In other words, the Shadow must be able to set aside his view to truly and clearly know this exterior point of view. It is obvious that a certain degree of empathic skill comes in to play. The saying is that "there are two sides to every story"; there are infinite perspectives and perceptions really. Awareness of that truth alone and mindfulness of it is paramount.

To recap, perspective gives the Shadow Jedi facts, information and data about his environment. The way perspective is understood is based on that person's whole make-up. The perception a Shadow takes on that information is interpretive and instinctual. While one must monitor his own perspective and perception, the Shadow Jedi also factors in that of those around him.

Be mindful.

Action in Inaction: Following the Will of the Force

One of the goals of the Shadow Jedi, and of any Jedi in general, really, is to forge a connection with this mysterious power we call the Force. To work within its bounds for whatever cause we support. But what is the Force? You will often hear people spouting lines from the Star Wars movies in order to explain what it is and how to touch it. In my opinion, this is pointless.

Let's take a look back at our roots as Shadow Jedi: Eastern philosophy. Our philosophy, as Shadows, is based primarily in Zen Buddhism and Taoism. I will not go into a long lecture here, as this is not a thesis on how Eastern philosophy relates to the Shadow. That in itself is an entirely different (and much longer) discussion. Suffice it to say that in both Buddhism and Taoism, the basic doctrines hold that in order to live as we are meant to, in close relation with the Ineffable or the Tao (the Way,) we must quiet our minds, still our thoughts, and open ourselves up to guidance from this higher order.

We, as Shadow Jedi, have also found this to be beneficial. In order to follow the Will of the Force, one must not force action. That is not to say that we should simply sit in meditation all the time, waiting for the Force itself to do something. As we walk our paths individually, we come to forks in the road. Decisions must be made, for better or for worse, big and small. All decisions are of equal importance. All will influence your life to some extent. Instead, as we come to these turnings in our paths, we first look

within. Reflect upon which choice you want to make. Having done this, look beyond yourself. Open yourself up to the Force. Do you feel that this decision is right?

There will be times that you get no answer. This could be simply because you have not quieted your thoughts enough. It is possible that you are too focused on what you want, than what is actually best for you. Or it could be that there is no specific "right" or "wrong" choice in that particular instance. Other times, however, you may not need to go through any process. There will be those times when you are faced with a decision, and almost before all the options are presented to you, you will know which is the one to take. In times of absolute certainty like this, it is imperative to follow through.

So you see, it is not truly inaction which leads to following the Will of the Force. It is merely a lack of forced action. Over time, you will become more adept at sensing the delicate currents of the Force, and thus you will subconsciously move with it. There will, eventually, come a point where there is no longer any need to look separately within and without to find your answers. When you release the ego, the sense of self, you will truly be one with the Force.

Dark Jedi Lectures

A Code

Believe this.

Believe that every second spent following this code is a second not spent leading your

own life.

Believe that every second spent contemplating this code is a minute not spent acting.
Believe that you cannot dismiss every conceivable situation with a convenient quotation from this code.

Believe that every situation deserves individual calculation and contemplation, and

Believe that this code cannot help you.

Believe that that this code is indecipherable.

Believe that living by this code is conforming with this code.

Believe that every dogmatic word of this code is a chain around your neck.

Believe that this code says you should do what I think is right, not what you think is right.

Believe that to challenge this code will mark you out as a dissident and your prospects for advancement will be automatically reassessed.

Believe that once you accept this code, you will be just like all the other people who accept this code.

Believe that learning this by heart means that you can recite it without thinking of its damaging implications.

Believe that there is nothing to believe here.

Believe that there is nothing to see here.

Move along.

Darkness and the Individual

Darkness is about the individual.

We are all bound together. But the darksider knows that, no matter what connections exist, real or perceived, he is his own person, responsible for his own destiny, responsible for shaping his own path.

Darkness is about knowing the individual.

We must cut through the lies we weave around ourselves, we must go beyond the way we shield ourselves. This means untangling knots in the way we think and behave which prevent us from knowing what we are, and acting as we are. We must find out how we think, what we think, what we believe, what we are capable of.

Darkness is within the individual.

We are called to an internal journey. We must explore ourselves, through action and contemplation. We are physical beings, and so exploration of what we are, means placing ourselves in relation to the world, feeling things about the world; passions, beliefs, taking positions, both on the basis of emotion and tactical reason. We are also spiritual beings, and truth is not to be found simply by becoming aware of behavior; we must become aware of those desires which may only enter our consciousness on occasion; for example when we stripped bare by a traumatic happening, or suddenly feel alone in the night, or

are suddenly joyful. Through meditation, contemplation and prayer, we can begin to look within to find our spiritual self, and see things with an eye which is not purely material; an eye which knows, for example, that music is not simply a pleasurable aural sensation, but an experience which affects the whole individual.

Darkness is explored by the individual.

The map of the world has been filled. The land is claimed, and each feature has been given its name. And yet, the world around us is entirely new to us. Certainly, we walk along our street, find our way along familiar paths. And yet, we are unaware. Not mindful of the collage of feelings, actions, of things being constructed and broken all around us. We are not mindful of the reality within which we exist, but move, confident that we know our way around a place we have never even dared to look at. Each drip of paint, each fly poster, each blade of grass has meaning for us to find, and we are connected, as though by an umbilical cord, to the world around us; the force within us reaches out to make itself a manifest consciousness in the world, and so the self becomes joined to, and dependant on the universe in which it is placed. Everything we experience is a brother and a sister to us, and yet we ignore it. It is shrouded in unknowing. We must peer into this darkness.

Darkness is individual.

It falls to each of us to discover what darkness is for themselves. To piece together the mosaic from brief glimpses of things we fear and things we desire. To shape our own aspirations, to walk on our own journey. Certainly, there are times when we crave companionship on the journey, times when we seek hands to hold. But ultimately, we must confront the self. We cannot offer a public dissection of a corpse, so that all can understand the anatomy of darkness. Darkness has an anatomy which is constructed differently for each person. Therefore, the only answers are the ones you can find yourself. Certainly, the world has tools to offer; for example, psychoanalysis, meditation, prayer, art; all of these allow us to find ways of expressing and exploring what the self means. So, while it is worthwhile to learn and understand methods of exploration, and we hope that the dark path at this academy will help you to equip yourself with such tools, ultimately, you must pick up these tools; you must explore yourself, you must explore your universe. Look into the dark unexplored and see what might make itself known.

Like a snowflake you too are unique among countless others. However the differences can be difficult to detect and indeed you might need to examine yourself closely to determine what exactly it is that makes you a unique individual.

As the foundation of your being, your genes can be assumed to be the root of everything else about you. Most prominent would be the matter of your physical appearance; however two or more persons can easily look exactly the same. Therefore it is the inside of yourself you must examine to determine what makes you the individual you are. One of the more dominating factors in defining who you are is the choices you make. Hence every time you forgo making up your own mind, you forgo a chance to define

yourself. Each time you limit your choices you limit the ways in which you could define yourself. Whenever you fail to stand by the choices you make, you fail to stand up for who you are.

Values, or ideals, are another big factor of what defines you as an individual. What matters to you should to a great extent dictate your choices, in that your choices should always be in the interest of what you deem important, or otherwise valuable. If they are not, they are not really your choices and as such will not truly serve you as an individual. Like a thick crust, your thought pattern surrounds your personality, containing all other aspects underneath its layer. At times it will dictate all other factors of your personality and at other times they will dictate it.

More so, the way you think regulates how you interpret the world around you and the experiences within it. Two or more people can interpret the world in exactly the same manner, and so it alone does not make you unique. What does is the basis of your interpretation, the things you experience. In turn your interpretations of experiences will alter your thought pattern, and thereby your whole personality. The more you experience, the more opportunities you have to define yourself.

Largely based on your thought pattern and your values, there will be certain goals that mainly your choices will determine if you reach or not. The most obvious goal will often be that of self preservation, because if there are no you, there are no values, or choices of yours to take and hence no goals in the first place.

Self preservation as a priority in this day and age might seem a little paranoid. However, there is more to it than what first appears. As your values, and choices define you as a person you must make sure that they are preserved as well as your physical being, because without them you would not be who you are. Not to say that you should not change or compromise, but merely that when you do, it should, wherever possible, be a choice of your own, and not that of others.

Knowing your values, being mindful of your choices and going for your goals will greatly assist you in furthering you as an individual in the sense that you will have an easier time recognizing yourself as someone unique as opposed to just another stereotype. The importance of which cannot be overstated.

When snow falls on your shoulders it is a mere nuisance, when a snowflake is examined it is truly beautiful. While the snow outside the windows is ultimately insignificant to your life, it is the snowflake that rests in your palm you remember and that has such impact on your life.

Men who follow idols rarely get as far as those they follow.

People follow people for a number of reasons. A religious leader may be followed by people in search of spirituality, a politician by people who believe in a particular political creed, and a philosopher by those who seek learning. This essay will attempt to examine the principle benefits gained from being a philosopher, how best a follower may learn from the teacher and the importance of reason and an open mind.

The benefits of discipleship are as varied and diverse as the number of people who have ever written or uttered a few thought provoking words. From Jesus to Keynes, before, between and after, there lie many men worthy of study. It is a desire to learn which draws one towards these people. These 'great' people encourage the inquisitive mind and challenge them to understand, to study these great people, and to learn from what they taught.

Learning from great men and women does not, however, mean imitating them. It means learning from their energy and creativity. It means studying their ways and becoming 'great' yourself. What the great men and women of the world do is show you that you, must be creative YOURSELF. You must follow in their footsteps and doing as they did, learn from past philosophers. You must then again follow in their footsteps and do as they did by walking away from the steps which have been taken before and branching out upon a path of your own.

Learning is where the beauty lies in discipleship. Be it Judas, Peter or Paul the dedication to learning of these fishers of men was what made them holy. Jesus never wrote a word and he's message was simple and yet he demanded he's followers to give up all they had to be with him and learn, something which is by no means simple. Learning is the key to success in our lives, in whatever it is you may desire. However learning goes beyond that. As a fly or dung beetle has the ability and therefore the role of helping break down waste, a human has the ability and therefore the role of learning. In neglecting this role, which placed humanity at the peak of evolution we neglect our duty and surrender the task for which we were made. In essence, a day in which you learn nothing is a day wasted. Who do we learn from? Great men and women.

What may be the best way to learn from these teachers? Learn from as many and diverse a number as possible. Do not study the great thinkers of the West alone however. Learning from the philosophers of the East, of Africa and of the Arabic world will teach an individual far more then seeing the world through the eyes of a few Westerners. Many 'discoveries' which the Western world claims for itself came from afar and many written thoughts go ignored due to the arrogance many have within our Western culture. It is also worth remembering why you learn. While the learning and knowing of old facts may be a worthwhile venture, the creation of new thoughts is far better. I would even go so far as saying that the purpose of learning old facts is solely for the creation of new and better thoughts. Creativity grows out of diversity and so you must enrich your mind with the words of many great people. A thought worth remembering.

I think I'll finish with a quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson from his essay 'History'. It covers the last point I desire to make and fits quite nicely here. A good description of our ability to empathize.

'There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the estate. What Plato has thought he may think; what a saint has felt he may feel; what at

any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind, is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent.'

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a byword for a number of aspects which, along with meditation and strategy, are a key part of the foundation blocks of the Dark Knight's psyche. It means being aware. Aware of yourself, your environment, your past, your present and above all your own will. It is a stepping stone that is located somewhere between meditation and strategy, as the only way it may be comprehensively achieved is through meditation and the only way a competent strategy may be reached and enforced is through a well informed state of mindfulness.

For an individual to be mindful he or she must understand and attempt to further their understanding of what he or she is and why. You must be aware of your thoughts, the reasons for them, the way your emotion moulds your thoughts, and the consequences which they have upon your actions.

To be mindful you must be aware of your environment, your environment being both the people around you and the resources at your disposal, as well as the resources not at your disposal. A mindful person understands the effects his or her actions have upon the environment and the effects which the environment has upon themselves. Awareness of your environment is a two way process with the individual changing the environment and the individual learning and adapting in accord with the environment.

A further aspect of mindfulness is the understanding of the past, present and future and the way in which they interact. When studying the present you must be aware of its past so as to enable you to better control the outcome of the present.

Being aware of your own will is perhaps the most important aspect of mindfulness. Your will, driven by your emotions, sets out the whole purpose of your path and is the light that guides you along it.

As your proficiency with mindfulness increases your natural awareness will begin to present itself more firmly. Like intuition, it is a feeling or knowledge about things around which will occur to you and be obvious to you with far less effort than was necessary before. Like all things you wish to excel at you must practice mindfulness too. It will emanate from both your conscious and non-conscious mind, and the Force which is present there, which will become clearer the more adept you become.

Overview

A.

Awareness of yourself

You must strive to understand your mind, body and actions, the relationship which they have with each other and what has caused them to be what they are.

B.

Awareness of your environment

You must be aware of your environment which means both the people around you, the resources at your disposal and those not at your disposal. You must understand the effect your actions have upon your environment and the effect your environment has upon you. Remember it is a two way process.

C.

Awareness of your past, present and future

You must maintain awareness and understand the change and continuity inherent in the things around you.

D.

Awareness of your will

You must keep in mind your dream and higher purpose when you act.

E.

Intuition

Intuition is an outcome of mindfulness, the more mindful you become the intuitive becomes your mind. It is an outcome and a result of continually attempting to gain mindfulness.

A, B, C and D must be continually studied, improved and applied by the individual to the individual, and E will follow from these. If there is any single most important precursor of mindfulness it is to be aware that it involves working for continual self improvement.

see a mindfulness on the airfield. There are five aircraft and only one small hangar, so every time it's a big puzzle to get them out, and at the end of the day, in again. After the gliders are ready to go a list has to be made so we all know what to do. We wait and help the other pilots to get the planes ready to fly again.

It is my turn to fly. I am still flying with an instructor, but I'm the one doing the work. After the concentration required for the cockpit check it's time to start. This is the time when you have no control, you are launched from 0 to 100km/h in one second. When you are up you have no time to think, but you must drop the cable, make speed and regain total control of the glider.

Now the most fun part comes. I sit back, concentrate, and become almost one with the glider. Now I look at the situation and let random thoughts control the glider, and if I can't find any thermals, I pick another spot that feels as though it contains a lot of thermals. I go on feeling my way through these pieces of air.

Suddenly, the instructor says I'm too low. I say to him that I know, but that I will be at the right altitude when I arrive at checkpoint. He does not believe it, but I succeed at this; I have succeeded three times now, but the instructor keeps ignoring it. Next I come in for the landing; that is the hardest part of the flight, but my body is acting strangely. It is telling me not to land. But I have to land, so I put the feeling away, and the connection I had with the glider disappears, so I have to land based upon my reactions and what I have already learned. The landing was not a real success if you ask me, but another guy says it

was the best landing of the five I have made so far. We roll the glider back to the start place and get back to work.

Constant concentration and knowledge about what happens around you is necessary. If you lose this, there is a chance of losing your life. It may sound a little exaggerated, but people have lost everything because of losing their concentration, and their connection.

On Truth

We are all liars.

We lie in every social pretence, in every mitigation of every word. All our ceremonies, all our customs, all our traditions are like coral reefs where dead lie encrusts upon dead lie, which we dust with fragments of living lies, created by us in order to escape from that which makes us feel uncomfortable. Every social nicety is a lie crafted in order to escape confrontation. Every time we say "I feel fine" when really we feel a throbbing and painful emptiness, a longing or lust for something long hidden.

And it is a lust. It is the taboo desire to enter and be entered by something we have lost any concept of ever having existed, something we were alienated and ostracized from long before birth, and whose embrace seems far away.

Our lies are to deny this lust through sticking a veneer over our internal doubt. It is a veneer of vacant smiles, of noise pretending to be music, of purchase power... so many lies, which cannot be listed here, because they have leeches into every aspect of our lives. Our every action is directed towards lies engineered as attempts to avoid asking ourselves the critical questions which we imprison within our heart because we are too terrified to ask them.

Why even now do I need to write in the most convoluted prose? Why is it impossible for me to escape the pretence of being 'sublime'? Am I afraid of being understood? This is possible; to be understood is to run the risk of being challenged and publicly humiliated, and your appearance in the face of the community is, of course, everything in our artificial lives where our role in the community is not based upon interdependence and love, but rather fear of isolation, and the loneliness in which we might find ourselves posing the dangerous questions which we do not wish to ask.

But I believe it is not fear of you understanding me that leads me to craft so much pretentious nonsense, but fear of understanding myself. Because to express it in the most simple way is simply to expose me to myself.

Yes, language is a means of communication; it is a simple means by which we can attempt to express meaning; to explain our will and desires and comprehensions to others. But it can also be used as a facade; an attempt to explain away those things I understand every time I play a devastating chord on the piano, an attempt to draw the curtains as I see myself lurking in the distance as the subjects of a Bach fugue interact.

We are accused of lying and manipulating, of bearing false witness to achieve our ends.

This is ignorance; every social act is a lie and a manipulation; turning a blind eye in the name of expedience. We lie, yes. But the lies we should fear are not those visible lies, but the lies so internalized that we forget we are telling them.

We are frightened of stripping away these lies and finding the unknown underneath. But we must listen to our deeply longing lust, listen to that internal longing we suppress. We thirst for something more, and we must seek it. This is to strip away the facades, the games, the pettiness, the kitsch, the denial, the lies. To cast them off and to look over the edge.

We fear the darkness which is over the edge because we cannot see what lies within. Yet within this darkness is a journey, a pilgrimage upon which we must embark; a quest which must be central to our lives. We must stand in the midst of the darkness, and as our eyes and senses become more attuned to it, we will fear it less, and realize that there is nothing to fear about the unknown, for while there is darkness ahead, there is also hope that what is in front of us may be the very object which we as individuals must choose to walk away from society to seek.

The core of philosophy is this; we must seek to embrace truth. To peer into the darkness of unknowing. Truth, the complete exposition of what we are, the complete abandonment of all the illusions we hold dear, because they are just that--- illusions. Lies whose truth we have convinced ourselves of.

To understand, firstly, and most importantly, that we are all liars, and this is a lie.

Meditation

Meditation is not an escape. It must always be about confronting life, confronting life's lies and truths. When we meditate, we are searching to understand the whole picture of the force; the unimaginable diversity and oneness of everything which exists, and the uniqueness of the individual and his will to power.

We are yearning for fullness. We want complete awareness of the self. When we meditate, we are not turning our heads away, but looking straight at reality.

Our reality is internal and worldly. We want to explore our shifting meanings and beliefs, to try and understand our purpose, and what we desire. But this can never be cut off from the world. Without the world, we are lost in idle fascination of our own floating selves. Reality does not exist simply locked away in a secret world of mind or spirit; it is to be seen and found in creation, in our interactions, in how we feel about people and things. Our reality is one of existing in the world. We want to know the world, not just looking out of the corner of our eyes, but looking straight at it with all the strength we can muster.

Are our internal and external worlds locked together, wrapped around each other? If so, meditation cannot be a self discovery in the absence of outside influence, or an experimental observation of the world without the subjective influence of the self.

Meditation is the attempt to find complete mindfulness; it is an attempt to see the whole in the uniqueness of every pulse of existence.

The meditations we will present here represent this idea of understanding the self as a being within the world. We must explore physicality, emotion, the subjective mind and its interpretations, and work not towards emptiness, but towards wholeness.

Be mindful.

The warrior stands in meditation. This is because his meditation is in the moment, not out of it. He is standing at the centre of his life, he is not able sit on the edges of it.

He must live. When the moment comes, he must act. So he stands, ready to respond.

With his feet on the ground, he can feel desires and feelings rise from the world. Up, through his body; to his mind, where they take shape; and outwards, to the limbs, where they can be given back to the world through action.

Desires; our hopes of the day, the things we want and need, goals, dreams. They rise up from the earth, through the body, to the mind, and out through the limbs back into the world.

Emotions; feelings about the world, about how you'd like to be, about how you respond to what you're seeing now, to what you saw yesterday, to what you might see tomorrow. They rise up from the earth, through the body, to the mind, and out through the limbs back into the world.

Passions; our fears, our anger, our joy, our hate, our love, the things which fill our hearts, energize us, electrify us, both giving us the will and the energy to live. They rise up from the earth, through the body, to the mind, and out through the limbs back into the world.

In this way, the warrior stands communing with the earth, communing with himself and his emotions, completely filled with life, always ready to act.

Be mindful.

The flow of all things is to be born, to live and to die. This flow is eternal, and is reflected in the breath of all creatures, and in the life of all matter, and even all thoughts.

Through meditation, we can become one with the wholeness of the world around us. We can sing in tune with the flow of life itself. Meditation is not about retreating into nothingness and emptiness, but is about embracing the simplicity and immortality of the whole of which our lives are one important part.

Here we will chant the mantra "AUM".

A (make the sound "ah") is a sound which comes from the throat, which leads into the resonance of U (make the sound "ooo"), which leads into the closing of the mouth and the humming of M.

The guttural sound of A emerging from the throat is a birth. The sound emerges suddenly, just as we enter the world from the womb, or an idea flashes into our mind. U is the vibration of life. It is the fire of the sun, the flow of a river, the daily happiness and struggle of our own existence. Eventually it dies and subsides, and the mouth closes, and there is M. There is energy in this humming, but it is an energy changed and dispersing, ready to be transferred to give birth to other life.

The rise and ebb of life is in each breath, each pulsing of the heart, each flicker of energy in the mind; and this same rise and ebb is shared by all life. To chant AUM is one way of resonating with the flow of life, in its sound is a vibration which expresses the birth, life and death of all things.

Be Mindful.

Strategy

The Dark Paths do not make moralistic calls on whether or not an action is right or wrong, but will state that an action can cause more liabilities than benefits if not properly considered. The key is thinking through one's actions and taking complete responsibility for them regardless of what happens.

You are in control of what happens, therefore you must act accordingly.

The Fisherman, The Farmer, The Wolf

This is the account of three lessons which were presented to me during a period of meditation.

The first lesson was of the archetype of the Fisherman. The fisherman lured in the fish with sweet bait, so sweet that they swam from miles around simply to smell it. The bait was so sweet that they fought among themselves to be the first to grab the bait (and, unknown to them, skewer themselves on the hook). It was as though the fisherman promised the bait as an offering only to those of good taste; and the fish were eager to prove that they were of good taste, that they were capable of appreciating the fisherman's gift, which hid the hook on which they would be caught. Through pride and greed they spurred themselves forwards to be the successful victim.

And when the hook which lurked behind the sweet tasting bait became visible, the fish had no means of escape, for the fisherman had cast out his net to contain the fish, and restrict where they could move. The fisherman had hemmed in his fish; on one side they were restricted by pride, on the other side by fear of the unknown, on a third side by their

own laziness, and on a fourth by their sense of rigid morality. This was a net which surrounded the fish, a net which surrounded them with the knowledge that there was no alternative than to be contained within the net, that there was no means of escape.

And so the net bulged full, and through the weight and size of his catch, he became the wealthiest fisherman.

Through this lesson, I saw that there is strength and power through the accumulation of a large catch, and the means through which such a catch is achieved in the world.

As I meditated further on the archetype of the fisherman, his bulging net of fish became rolling hills, and on these hills grazed sheep. I then learned the second lesson, which was the archetype of the Farmer.

It was clear that this farmer had studied the ways and behavior of the sheep. He was aware of their every movement, and could understand the path they walked. He had not been too proud to see their ways, to see their concerns, to reach a full understanding of their lives, and how they lived. Through this knowledge, the farmer was able to control his sheep, and knew how best to lead them.

The farmer knew well that if he ran at the sheep flapping his arms, he would look a fool. And so the farmer employed sheepdogs who would chase the sheep, restrict their options, and through fear, force them to move in the directions he required. He knew all too well that the sheep feared pain, pain of all kinds, physical and emotional pain; and also the pain that comes from confronting reality.

But the farmer also knew well that sheep can collapse through fear and fatigue, and was ready to massage the sheep's egos through wily politeness and respect, through befriending and offering gentle nudges through sugary smiles and promises. Through lies he led, always being sure that he did not lie to himself. And so the sheep followed through what they thought was their own will, as they lacked the ability to listen to their own will.

Those sheep who had their own will, who would eat differently, and at different times, who would appear individually minded, would be shunned by the flock, and thought dangerous. Here, the farmer picked up the rejected sheep and put him around his shoulder, saying "you are no sheep; you are awake while the others still sleep, and so you have become something greater, more aware than them. You are my brother. (And the farmer was thought strange for seeing a brother where other farmers saw only a sheep; for the blind exist even among farmers, and they could not see that this was no sheep.)

And the farmer also found brothers among those sheep who had fallen on their back, watching them as they failed to return their feet to the ground. These sheep he returned to their feet and said "You are my brother, because the foundations of your world have been ripped apart, and that is why you could not stand. Your reality failed you, and now you

will see a new, broader reality. Your world has been destroyed, and you will soon see a thousand new worlds, and in this, you are my brother."

Through this lesson, I saw the means through which the world leads the sheep, through predicting their patterns of behavior and concern, and manipulating this knowledge. I also saw the ways in which I could recognize those among the herd who were not of the sheep.

The third lesson came to me a great deal later, and involved much internal struggle. It occurred while I was meditating on the scene of the Farmer herding his flock. Another farmer approached him and sought to shake his hand and embrace him as a brother, but the farmer stood back.

"True, you are a farmer like me, but in being a farmer, you long to steal away my sheep, and in this, you are no brother of mine".

Following these words, the visiting farmer ripped off his skin, for underneath he was a wolf, and said "You are to be congratulated for seeing my intentions, but it is no matter, for I will eat your sheep anyway."

With these words, the wolf knocked the farmer to the floor with a vicious strength, and proceeded to tear a sheep apart, delighting as its blood trickled down his muzzle and onto his fur. The farmer, returning to his feet, ran at the wolf, and wrestled with it. He understood the moves of the wolf, and preempted them, for he was wise in the ways of combat. However, the wolf was equally wise, and equally rational as he countered the movements of the farmer. And yet the wolf was stronger, for there was greater strength in his passion to taste the flesh and blood of the sheep than there was of the farmer to protect the sheep, for the farmer was only a simple economist, and truly had no love for the herd with which to parry the wolf's overwhelming lust.

And so the farmer turned and fled, for he was not too much of a coward to accept failure.

Through this lesson, as the Farmer fled, I saw that there is wisdom in retreating and learning from failure, and building stronger in the knowledge of this failure. But through the ascent of the wolf, I saw the great power that lies in passion. The wolf was a strategic fighter, and used reason in his struggle with the farmer; yet this reason was driven by passion, a passion which could not be matched by the farmer. And so I saw that employment of reason alone is mere game playing, but passion without reason leads to failure through lack of direction. The wolf was victorious because he deployed reason alongside the overwhelming force of passion, which the farmer lacked.

And so, through the net full of fish, the movements of the sheep on the hills, and finally, the passion of the wolf, I, as a dark knight, gained some understanding of how power is woven in this world.

The Chess Pieces

The gathering of knowledge can be a powerful tool.

Why are you here at the Force Academy studying? Is it merely social interaction you seek?

If so, there are many other chat channels that are available.

I hope all here are seeking knowledge.

What knowledge is useful to us? All knowledge is useful. Anything learned can be applied elsewhere, in your daily working or social lives.

All knowledge is learned for a reason... and can be exploited in some manner... The mindful Dark Warrior will find and be able to apply everything their mind absorbs to their benefit.

All Dark Warriors should view life as a political battle or a game of chess... A battle to be won at all costs. My personal philosophy in life is to see what you can gain from people... Now, this doesn't have to apply to everyone. I believe that people can be friends for no thought of gain, but then again, even they can be useful, by coincidence.

Taking this thought further, you can continue along this vein and place your pieces in buckets. Let me expand.

Taking the classical chess board to heart is a fine way to grasp this theorem. There are several levels of piece. All expendable, some only to be sacrificed at great gain...

We have the pawn. The fodder of the conflict- the true sheep of the field. They have little intellect and merely plod along in a forward motion, using no thought pattern of their own. They can be useful, to exploit an enemies weakness, or merely to "feel out" the opposition and their stance on items or agendas.

By this, I mean the pawns only have the info they are passed. Rarely privy to any great gems of information, but can be useful for seeing what the enemy is trying to present.

Take for instance a facet of the Force:

The lowest soldiers or merest Apprentices in their early days shall mirror what they have learned as "acceptable". This is where insight into the thought pattern of your opponents can be viewed. Has the projection seemed subversive? Are the Pawns being used for misinformation? Are they to be sacrificed to shadow an opponents hand? This is where the value of such lowly and non-thinking pieces is placed. Do not underestimate the pawn, for they have strength in numbers, expendability and as sources of information or disinformation.

We also have the Rook (Castle). Moves forward, backwards and side to side. A formidable opponent in his determination. They are the light artillery of a conflict and can cause some serious damage. They are the swift aggressive players on the battlefield

of life. They are the right arm of their leaders and are usually wielded with some skill. In the circles we keep they may be considered as a Knight of the Force. Doing as they are bidden, but with some skill. They are to be considered possibly dangerous, but not to an experienced user. They are an excellent opportunity for misinformation. They are oft very self-important and can be used by taking advantage of this handle. A Rook can also be used wisely by a skilful master to achieve objectives through sacrificing. Be warned that a skilful Rook can be dangerous. They can strike and swiftly retreat, leaving a swath of destruction in their wake.

The Bishop. They are a little better than pawns and not quite on a par with a Rook. They attack diagonally in any direction. As such they can be a real distraction to a well placed figure. They can be forgotten in the scheme of things and this can return to haunt any combatant not Mindful enough. Their strike can be swift and painful, but they usually lack the direction or skill of their own to wreak any real havoc. A threat to be mindful of, but can be put on low priority.

The Knight. One of my favorite opponents or tools. They move in an erratic pattern of two spaces in one direction, then one in another. They are useful to any side who would wield them correctly. Their attacks are oft hard to notice and they can wreak a swift, vengeful, hateful attack. I see them as free thinking and with the common good at mind. A knight can easily seal the game and can sway other pieces with its facades. It is this ability to think for itself that makes the Knight such a useful tool. Be mindful that I do NOT equate a Knight of this Academy with this combative equivalent. This player may be of nearly any rank or station and as such can present an unobvious assailant. They are wise in their planning and attacks. They are constantly planning and calculating. They can be lethal at the most unexpected times. This is a rare piece in this academy. They are the true Wolves clothed as sheep. If you have one, utilize them wisely. Should you encounter one, Beware!

Now the Queen and King.

The Queen. An interesting Combatant in her abilities and ego. This piece can strike thee dead, and she knows it. A rare case when Ego does not lead to a downfall. A key player for any side, though not all "sides" seem to have one. She wields great power and influence. And knows it. She can go anywhere and knows it. She can confront and destroy any, and she knows it. Beware her frontal attack. Confronting this opponent openly is not the way. They need to be baited and lured to a place of your design. They need to be destroyed with wits, not with brute strength. A collection of well placed pieces will conquer, but at what price? This you need to decide. As for using your Queen... Strike hard and fast with her. Use her to threaten from one angle and attack with a Knight. She offers you the ultimate Sword with which to swing, but strike with the dagger. A valuable piece which can be used like a blunt club or gracefully arcing like the swiftest saber. To sacrifice her you must have the ultimate goal in thy reach. To battle her you must have the ultimate plan in place.

The King. One square at a time, any way you please. A doddering old fool? Nay. He may be slow to flee or hard to strike with, but the reason is clear. It is hard for him to wear the

Garb of the Sheep. He is obvious. He stands out. But his true value is in the Knowledge of Years. Mayhap he cannot strike telling blows, but the blows that are dealt are usually his doing. A strategist. Safe from harm within the Amour of his troops he amasses.

Now, judge for yourself in which bucket your friends go, your allies go, your opponents go and lastly yourself.

Where do you want to be? What goal do you reach for? It can be achieved with the Mindful thought of the Dark Warrior. Categorize your enemies. Know their weaknesses and strengths. Amass your armies and troops. Know THEIR weaknesses and strengths. Lastly know yourself: Know your strengths and weaknesses. The most Mindful Master has glaring weaknesses if they are searched for... The pawns have their own. Seek and ye shall find.

Now to wrap this up... and answer the questions of the less mindful...
“How does this apply to me?” “I am just a pawn, I have no armies!”

If this is the case, 'tis your own doing. Gather your forces, gather those who would call thee “Friend”. Build the bridges necessary to gain your goals, whether they be the claiming of a Queen to your army or the moving of a Knight to your opponent's King. You decide your place on this board of life. You decide where you work, how your Life progresses, whether you get a promotion, how your relationships are conducted. You are in control if you want to be...

If you wish to be a sheep, that is fine. All armies need fodder, all wolves need food. I know where I place myself. Perhaps I shall see you at dinner?

Always Mindful, always Dark.

I have now described the way I classify allies and foes on the chessboard of life. Today I would like to discuss the Board itself.

Far too many disregard strategy in their lives. Most are all too happy to float along in whatever current carries them, or allow themselves to be swept along by the “flock”. Not enough people take the truly Mindful warrior's view of life... That it can be planned, and goals achieved by the use of the correct strategy.

In order to achieve a desired result, a Warrior must make best use of what they have at hand... or who they have at hand. Too many people do not work opponents towards the desired sections of their board. Hoping that someone will make a move that suits your needs is not only foolish, it is wasteful. Chances and opportunities are lost.

Sometimes an opponent needs the correct coaxing or even baiting to maneuver them to where you wish. This could be a well worded statement, or carefully placed information. Never underestimate the importance of knowing your opponents. Study their weaknesses and exploit them at your will. As with all these theories and stratagems, they can be

applied to all facets of life, the workplace, etc. Maneuvering opponents into a corner or allowing them to perhaps think that the direction you wish for them is their own decision. How you do this is completely up to you, but do not dismiss this idea.

Allowing opponents to run to the Avenue you choose is simple, allow them no other option. This can be done in conversation or debate, simply guide the conversation to where you want it. Never underestimate the value of spectators. Always be mindful of who hears or sees what. Never reveal a hand you may wish to keep for later. Especially against one of the spectators.

These discussion points are deliberately vague. The reason is that they are flexible theories for flexible application. The true value here is the understanding that these tactics exist. You must determine your own best use for them, as using any strategy that feels unnatural will result in the opposite result to the one desired. This is not a discussion or lecture in which I can say "Next do this..." You need to fill in the blanks. This is an exercise in awareness of strategy and surroundings.

Be mindful.

Everyone reading this is in school, or has been in school;
WE see the constant intimidation of people. We watch the weak pretend to be strong. We see this pretence, and we see it SUCCEED. I tell you this is a corrupt system. For these are Seen warriors.

The real warrior is the unseen, and that is what we must be; the unseen warrior; the duplicative warrior.

We look at these tall muscular popular types, they are feared because everyone knows they have muscle, and that their tall, so, as cause and effect would have happen, no one challenges them, they move neither backwards or forwards, and they are hated because they show off what they have.

Now, the unseen warrior has none of the reputation of the Seen warrior. He plays the weak link, he plays the dumb. He's quiet and doesn't do anything that shows his true strength, so he is underestimated...

Now, lets say some seen warrior is out to reinstate his skills, he sees you, the unseen warrior as easy pickings; you are quiet.

He thinks "you are a fool".

He thinks "now I will beat you up and prove my own strength".

You do nothing, you are still the unseen warrior as he throws his hits at you, you do nothing but defend these, never moving into an offensive point of view. When, and ONLY when he gives you a clear opportunity to knock him down, you do it, then say nothing. You leave, eyes wide open, in case he tries to jump you, or one of his sheepish friends does.

The unseen warrior is cunning and never shows his true power until its called for...be another face in the crowd, but make sure you can leave that position in a seconds notice.

But now, you have a problem. You have defeated the supposed undefeatable, and people will be intimidated by you, and the weak will admire you. you are now willingly or

unwillingly a seen warrior. Now, you shouldn't want this position now, because though your feared, people of your former opponents type are so egotistical and attention-addicted, that they will try to beat you, so they can say "I beat him (or her) up, he (or she) is a synch". Now, you must fall back into the unseen category. To do this you must not give into the temptation of their praise and respect, do not show off, these sheep are weak, so weak that they don't even know they are sheep, but they can tempt you into being one of them.

So you're ignoring the praise, but that doesn't erase peoples memories, they know your power now. So you act as if it didn't happen, and you might make up a lie to go with it, like "I didn't knock him down, didn't you see it? I tried to get away from him, and as he tried to stop me, he fell."

And I assure you, the person you knocked down will follow your lie too. Now people may still not believe you, but, people forget... in time, you are again the unseen warrior, but now stronger, and more experienced than before...

A darksider should have an idea of their end goal. Without this, tactics are meaningless; they serve to (roughly) achieve that goal in the way the darksider wants – for example, in the most effective way, the way that involves least work for them, the way that will avoid offending people, the way that will obviously display power etc.

This idea of INTENT or the GOAL is a concept key to Auftragstaktik or "mission tactics". This is a way of thinking and organizing an army that depended on every soldier knowing the overall goal, and "to do without question or doubt whatever the situation required, as he personally saw it. Omission and inactivity were considered worse than a wrong choice of expedient. Even disobedience of orders was not inconsistent with this philosophy."

A key thing the darksider can take from this is FLEXIBILITY. As said before, have an idea of your end goal on whatever scale it happens to be – whether it is leading a fulfilled life, or simply passing your next exam at school. There's no point in continuing with a way of doing things if it isn't working out for you – if you're chasing after that elusive fulfilled life, it's not necessary to get qualifications, get a job, find a house, find a partner and have 2.4 children in that order. Life is not a series of cans on a wall to be hit with stones in a particular order; life is unpredictable, and the way to cope with that is to have sufficiently flexible plans so you can move and adapt to it, instead of being shattered when things don't go in the way you expect them.

Flexibility is also in the eventual goals themselves; for example, in the course of your life you may decide that the goals you set for yourself as a teenager aren't what you want at all when you're in your mid-twenties, and again, the plans you made in your mid-twenties may not be feasible in your mid-thirties. In this case, why continue to pursue them?

Flexibility can also be expressed in the way we interact with people. For example, when you argue with people, you can use points that will appeal to them, or examples they can relate to. I am addressing this to the audience of the FA – a fairly diverse group, but largely informal. If I were addressing this to a different audience – for example, a more

formal one, an older or younger one, or from a different social standing within that group - I would use different examples that would illustrate the point to them, and bring what I'm saying into their world – making it relevant for them, which will allow them to see my argument more easily. We are flexible in every encounter we have with people, treating them differently depending on factors like their relationship to us and our recent history with them.

The darksider should show INITIATIVE – but here it's important to realize "...initiative is a desirable characteristic in a soldier only when its effort is concentric rather than eccentric: the rifleman who plunges ahead and seizes a point of high ground which common sense says cannot be held can bring greater jeopardy to a company than any mere malingerer."

Here, the strategist warns against sudden bursts of activity that don't seem to help the end goal – for example, losing a chess game because you saw a sudden opening that looked good but failed to realize your opponent had set you up. Although the move may look as if it will benefit you in the short term, in the long run it could hamper or be detrimental to your goals.

Initiative could be the desire and passion for action, but also to know when it's better to retreat or to call off a project when it no longer supports a goal. However, it is also important to realize there are times when it can be more costly to withdraw from an action or plan you have put into motion than to continue with a no longer helpful plan. Sometimes, the cost is less if you press on regardless. It is never an easy decision to make.

But how does the darksider know what action to take? He has set his goals, so he knows where he wants to go. But what things should inform him?

He is aware of what his logic tells him, but he is also aware of other things – for example, his emotions and passions and desires, his physical senses such as sight, smell, sound, taste and touch and his sense of morality. These will affect the darksider's actions – what may be logical may not be something he desires to do. In short, the darksider aims to let everything he is conscious of inform him and direct his actions.

Although the darksider aims to live by his passions and needs, he is not a sole organism but part of a community. Inevitably he draws on others for support and knowledge, and relies on others to help and support him. A darksider may find others who have similar visions to him and as such, will work with him to achieve their goals. People specialize in different areas and have different skills, therefore the darksider can DELEGATE tasks to others more suited to carrying them out.

However, this requires the darksider to have confidence in the abilities of those around him. A darksider is mindful of where his own strengths and weaknesses lie, and develops his awareness of what the strengths and weaknesses of those around him are. In order to be effective, a darksider must recognize the limitations of their abilities and

allow those stronger in that area to take over without interference. This can be a difficult thing to accept, given that we want to control how we achieve our goals, but the principle of Auftragstaktik means that you leave the specialists to their roles without hindrance.

For example, if I am the editor of a magazine or newspaper I have various people to work with. Some people are writers, each with their own specialist area such as sports, music, films or current affairs. Other people are involved with the layout and design of the pages, and others are responsible for artwork and photographs. My task is to see it all comes together, with the goal of getting it to the printers by the deadline and fulfilling the paper's brief, whether this is an entertaining and lively magazine, a critical and witty student paper or an informative and analytical newspaper.

To do this, I have to trust my colleagues to do their work without interfering and hassling them. I can't write the articles on my own as I lack the knowledge to cover all the sections; instead I rely on my specialist writers. I can't sort out the design on my own; instead I rely on the graphical artists, and so on. Through delegation, the work is better quality and I feel happier knowing that the project I'm passionate about is good.

Summation:

- 1) Intent – develop your awareness of your goals and intentions.
- 2) Flexibility – be flexible in how you go about achieving these goals, and give yourself room to adapt to sudden changes. Show flexibility in the way you interact with the world around you, such as the people you meet. Be flexible in the end goals themselves, and allow them to change if they no longer suit you.
- 3) Initiative – it's important to realize when an action is counterproductive in the long term, and whether or not to discontinue an action even if it's been set into place as it may cause more harm to call it off. Act when you're aware of all your reason and passion can tell you.
- 4) Delegation – sometimes you have to accept that your goals will be more easily fulfilled if you allow others to help you. Be mindful about this, and who you let help.

Trials

Philosophy 101

"Treat many as one, treat one as many."

When put under a lot of responsibility, it is easy to be assimilated with a sense of inability to complete the needed tasks. Likewise it is just as easy to set out of mind what seems

like a small obstacle easily to overcome, finding it irrelevant.

A good way to look at this is in a Martial Arts perspective. If one was suddenly surrounded by multiple opponents, the situation would look near impossible. But instead of looking at the experience as one giant obstacle, or wall, one should break it down into sections. Treat such an attack as one attack. Don't let yourself get overcome, instead step out of the circle and face one opponent at a time.

Just as easily, one may look at a single opponent or task thinking nothing of it, when really it may be beyond your power to overcome.

But as a Jedi we must stay clear headed and treat every threat, as a serious threat. Or in a non Martial Art perspective, the following quote comes to mind:

"If something is worth doing, it's worth doing right."

In other words, treat everything around you with the respect and dignity it deserves and you will live a much happier, fulfilled life.

Take care, and may The Force be with you.

The Ability to Levitate

I wondered what would happen if, by some strange fate of destiny, I suddenly had the power to fly anywhere I wanted to go. I could go see other places, other countries, having no limitations on how I could depart or how I would get there. What would such power gain?

After thinking about it for a while, I wondered if human beings were meant to be on foot. We do not have wings like birds; machines though are there to let us hover or glide within our Earth's firmament. I also thought of the problems one could have if one had the ability to levitate over the ground. I could do what Jesus did, float and walk upon the waters. People could conceive of me as a valuable person indeed, to the point of fixation.

And what if I did fly all over to see everything I could see? Every terrain explored, every landmark visited. What would I do next? Surely I could go on talk shows and do neat little tricks, possibly make a fairly good income.

Then I thought about actually being up in the sky, possibly thousands of feet away. How scared I would be. How fast would I go? Would I be pressured to act certain ways to my society? What about my family? Would they see me as a freak or be jealous of me? There are so many holistic factors, so many connections to so many different things. Now I wonder why I would even want to have the ability in the first place. What would I trade in order to have something else?

Noticing my feet, I see I was given a good reason to use them. Sometimes your head needs to be out of the clouds and down to Earth where it belongs.

Life's Lessons

I go through everyday with a very calm and collected attitude on things. There isn't much anger inside me, therefore I don't express much anger outside. I have experienced early on in life that anger is really not a useful emotion unless one is in complete control of it. This is hard for me to talk to you about this, but life's lessons are the most important. My dad beat my mom during the time they were married, my mom used to tell me about her wedding day, standing there in her wedding dress trying to conceal the bruises. My dad had much anger and he didn't have control. He never had control. I vowed to myself that I would never use anger to solve a matter right then when I first heard that my mom was beaten. It hurt me so much that someone could actually harm another human being that they are so close to. It still hurts, even after all these years.

Life's lessons are some of the hardest moments you will ever have to go through. But you learn a tremendous amount from them. They make you stronger emotionally and spiritually. You may not like going through them but you will respect them in the future. I don't respect the fact that my dad beat my mom, I respect that my mom had the courage to get a divorce. I feel that sharing what you have gone through and what people you know and love have gone through shows that you don't need to conceal your feelings. Why hide. Bottling up your emotions gets you nowhere but a one-way ticket loneliness, depression, anxiety, etc.

The Infinite Point

When you make a point with your pen or pencil, you may realize that it is not really a point at all. You probably just made a small circle, or possibly a polygon shape. The fact is that once you create a point, you are giving dimension; by giving dimension, you are creating shape. Yet realize that a point is actually a non-dimensional shape, for it represents a particular point in space, not an actual section of space. That would be a highlighted area of points.

I find that once something is placed into the physical world, one will lose the true conception of infinity, for infinity can only be presented in abstract thought or symbology. The same it could be said of ultimate perfection. No one can really draw a circle, for when drawn, it will be shown flaws even under the closest of speculation. Once something is in movement, the notion of time degrades the factor of infinity. Only by being at a standstill at all parts of history at the same time can one fully contemplate how infinity in movement truly is created.

Therefore, a point, in theory, is of all space and no space at the same time. How insightful.

Ripples Through Time

Have you ever thrown a stone into a pond, and saw the ripples energy from around the spot you tossed the stone? Do you see how it grows and grows, gets more finer and finer until it effects everything within the body of water you threw the stone in?

Every dropped a basketball, and saw it slowly bounce less and less ... until the bounces become so small and so fine, it becomes still as if you never dropped it at all?

Do you know when molecules are moved, they keep moving? They keep doing what they are doing until another force or energy affects its movement. This is called inertia. Kinetic energy, as named in science, is energy which is in motion, such as when you throw a basketball up in the air. Potential energy, the other type of energy, is the energy which is stored, such as after you throw the basketball up in the air and it starts coming back down due to gravity and other factors. How can we use these understandings and apply them to other situations?

A life effects the world. How come? Well, a life effects the people it experiences within one's lifetime. Those people effect other people within their lifetimes...and so on and so forth until the hold world is effected. But we can even see more than this. A life can effect the world every day, every minute and every second. By you reading this page, others act in a certain way, in which others act in a certain way, until everyone is effected by your action, and becomes so fine to the point you can't even see the effects at all. It becomes a part of life.

Things may seem to do what they have always been doing, such as the basketball which seems to stop bouncing after you let it bounce, or when the ripples were so disperse within the body of water, you couldn't even tell you through a stone in. But this doesn't mean it didn't happen. Just because things seem to stay they way they are, doesn't mean you haven't change it at all.

Realize what you do, is not only who you are, what everything is. Just as the Force effects and binds all things, so can you. Yet what do you want the world to effect? Are you willing to throw the stone? Are you willing to bounce the ball? Are you willing to act?

Yes is Yes, No is No

My former apprentice, Allowat Sakima, said this to a group of us one day at a discussion board:

"Everything has a simplest equation, a simple answer. Everything can be made into a yes, and a no."

As Jedi, things can become complex, or at least, seem complex. In reality, I have found nothing is really ever as complex as it seems. It is simply the fear of not knowing something, for there is a simple solution. There is a simple answer and there is a way to

go. Whenever you are in a situation you believe you can't get out of, think again...be mindful of what you know, and what you can do, because in most instances, you can do it and you can overcome the obstacle.

Through my experience as a human being, I have learned something else. What is, is. What isn't, isn't. The truth is the truth. There is no point in confronting something which cannot be confronted. There is no point in making something if it cannot be made - yet things can be made. Things can be accomplished. It is your job to be aware of these things.

Think of things in a higher level, yet keep your answers to the point. Make them count. If something can be said in a easier way, for someone to understand, say it. If something should be said with more depth, say it this way. As a Jedi, keep it simple, yet explanatory. Keep your comments clean and understandable. Don't overcomplicate your life with little nothings which will just cause you more stress and lack of energy.

There is a yes, there is a no. Know what they are. Study them, learn them, and use them. Don't be so concerned about what you don't know, as much as what you do know - because you know more then what you give yourself credit for (you know this already, don't you?).

He Said I Was

There are a few people in my life which has given me what I have now here on the Internet, as well as helped me become inspired into what I am today. These few people are the ones that created me, and by creating me, I also created them.

A personal situation in my life has always conflicted with my works as a spiritual guide, and that was to hurt one of my friends who I trust with my life to love another life in whom I trust. There has been many dark times for this group of people that I am talking about, and some of us seem to have been in better positions than others. Yet really why I am writing this is the fact that I had failed to realize how much my friends have helped me to what I am today - and though you may say this factor out loud, sometimes it takes a lifetime to understand that.

I know that we all have personal lives, yet I find that sometimes one must tell a certain understanding of a situation and blend it into something one can comprehend without having to know secretive happenings. This life of mine has really only one purpose, and that is to serve, rather it be to serve myself, my fellow man, or my maker. I have been called a what I have been called first from those that gave me my stardom, and it is for this point I make up now that I still go on with my Jedi duties.

If you search for bad things, you will easily find it. Yet if you search for the good, it will take all your life.

This is the reason why I strive to find the good in those that I care about, even when I had

experienced childhood moments that have given me a bias against certain friendships. It is that desire to show someone that you are worth being a friend, even if they don't like you - and that journey is a path to self discovery.

Thanks for the one that helped me see this. You will always be my brother, whatever may happen, and for that which does not meet my outcome, I hope that you will have it instead. For it is I that owe you.

The Secret Story

Each of us share a piece of the truth. Every single one of us. Do you feel it?

They say that the truth shall set you free. What we see inside...is what we know that exist within our universe. We are all connected to the truth, and share a story...a story so old and so flawless...that even today we keep them within ourselves...and sometimes, we tell others a small sliver of the story. Some of it is still being passed around to this day.

A story is hidden within us...time and age has made it different. We share it...can't you see it? Some see the story...through a distinctive culture...through a unique religion. They see the story. They believe in the story. Can't you see...that it is all the same thing? That it is all the same story? A story of hope, of peace, of love, of happiness, of joy, of faith, of goodness, of reverence, of mercy, of salvation, of kindness? You can see it...playing in your head...that moment in time in which you hold a key to the truth. And it will open a door for others...if you let them use it.

Unity is the key, my friends. And we unify to tell the greatest story ever known. The story of our LIVES. Of our universe. Of how we came into being. It is still being written to this day, as others are existing to share the story with us. We are all the authors as well as the readers of this awesome non-fiction masterpiece. The #1 bestseller...the five-star achievement. An 11 from a scale of 1 to 10. Filled with craftsmanship...and workmanship. Nothing else can top it. Complete and intact.

Isn't it cool!

It's perfection as best as I know it. Share your secret story...tell others...help others. Give them peace. Don't let it stay a secret any longer. There are those that want to know you...those that want to like you. You only have to want to...and believe that anything is possible. Anything. And it will be. It will be.

Lay down your fears. Pick up your courage...and carry on. Keepers of the promise...hold your head up high...and be thankful for what life has given you.

We are the reason to live.

Time As Our Dictator

What is time...a tool or a lesson? We find that we rely so much on time, that it seems to control our every move. Everything we do, it seems, we are always watching out for the minutes that go by. Slowly and surely, time dictates us, and calls us to attention.

We must understand that time is a protector, not a preventor. To control our own selves, we must realize that we control time, and not the other way around. It is the way we use it. Sometimes we must let time go as it may, and simply not worry about it, not to think about the next deadline. It's about now, and how we preserve it. The rest will take care of itself.

By letting ourselves control the next move, not the clock, we control our own destiny. By facing the fact that life goes on, and that we are part of it. The Force gives us a tool, teaching us that we--yes we--are our own dictators and decision makers of what happens next.

The Philosophy

"Who is the more foolish, the fool or the fool who follows him?"

We create so many complexities in our lives, it's time we step back, take a look at ourselves, and figure out what is really important.

One of the biggest problems that most people have is they are always dwelling on the past. The past has no meaning. If something bad has happened, don't hold on to the memory, let it go, and flow with the present....what is. There are exceptions of course. A criminal's actions cannot be simply forgotten. Only when that person is truly sorry for his actions, can he be forgiven, and should be forgiven.

When you dwell on the past, you create "friction" between yourself, and what is, and things become even more difficult. Flow like the moon reflected in the river. The waves in the water are oneness... totality... life... and you are the moon. The past and present can't be changed... only the future can be changed. Learn from your mistakes of the past, and use that knowledge in the future. Do not let the past over-power the present.

It is also important that you do not tear yourself up over injustices, corruption, and wrongdoings, simply accept things as they are! That doesn't mean though that you should just sit back and have no compassion for others. As I said, just don't tear yourself apart over things you truly can't do anything about. This can be applicable to many things. Flow with the disease, only then can you rid yourself of it.

If you want the truth to come forth to you, do not see things from your point of view, do not like or dislike, do not be for or against... see things as they are. Do not live in a "state of denial"... all will then become clear for you.

When you do not let your mind and your thoughts flow, then it is no longer the mind.

As even Obi-wan said," Let go of your conscious self". Open up... flow freely... your true self is your soul. Do not merely be with everything... be a part of it. Do not see things... feel them. Forget about the matter you are made up of... forget about your pride, your ego, your desire for victory, and simply be! Do not be bound by techniques... do not limit yourself... truly be who you are. When you learn that... then, and only then...can you fully realize the totality... life... the Force, or whatever you might call it.

Remember... things happen, because they happen. There is no 'why'...

Drop a pebble in a pond, and let the ripples form. Do not reshape the pond. Do not dig another pond. Following the Force seems to have been misunderstood by many. Many have said that they are the Force's servant, or that they surrender to it. This is wrong. Think of it as if you were controlling a boat traveling down a river. Those who would surrender to the flow would eventually hit a rock. Those who do not flow with it at all, and attempt to travel upstream against that flow, will not get anywhere. Those who keep control of their boat yet let the river take them to their destination, are truly wise.

The Awareness

Complete and total awareness is not simple to achieve. First of all, you must forget what you have learned about concentration. Concentration creates conflict because you are attempting to shut out everything else around you to single out one thing you actually wish to become aware of.

Through meditation, awareness can be achieved and perfected. When you do not discriminate anything, and take in everything, you are becoming aware. When you do not see things from your own personal point of view, then you are seeing it as it truly is. You must also forget about logic. Forget about "I am thinking this now" and "I am closing my eyes now". Let go of the logical, and accept the abstract. When you have quieted your own soul, then the voices of the Force can be heard.

When you are aware, you can understand peoples' feelings. Once you have actually felt a person's pain, or their joy, then you know awareness.

As for how to begin learning awareness, I would suggest being outside. Having a nice place to sit during a cool part of the day is ideal because you can relax and feel comfortable. If weather doesn't permit this, then I would suggest to simply find a quiet room and make sure you don't have any distractions. Some suggest lighting a candle or incense, but those are not really necessary. However, they do allow the mind to realize it is time to relax.

The Just Shall Live By Faith

"The just shall live by faith."

Martin Luther was an interesting individual. He lived in the 16th century, and was raised

in a particular religion as a monk, a teacher as you may call it, teaching others the truth that he was taught of.

Yet, he began to realize the flaws of his religion, even though he still believed it. That they were doing things that well...to him just didn't feel right. They thought that they were the only right way, and that there was no other. He began to question the Bible and studied it, to see what was so wrong.

One day he stumbled upon a text that knocked him out with clear realization.

"The Just shall live by Faith."

It meant to him that the honest and the virtuous people shall live in confidence, and with assurance. To believe what they can't see. In other words, Creed. That you shouldn't never chase physical things and say that yes, this is the ONLY truth out there.

And he started his own thing. His own way of life with his own answers, believing that anything is possible if you believe in it. Of course, other monks and other long admirers of him did not like his new way of life, and they tried to stop him...and get rid of his new ideals. Yet they couldn't. He believed in connection, and to stay in contact to others that kept the Faith. And he became well known.

So must we also do the same. As Jedi, we must study for ourselves the pieces of knowledge that we have, and come up with our own answers, even if others don't see it the same way and want to destroy you. It will never be taken for granted. This is the way of the Jedi, to stay firm and to believe in what you feel, even though you cannot see it.

The Just shall live by Faith.

Let Go

Imagine this: a little child, learning to ride a bicycle, falls, and scrapes his (using "his" for sake of reference only) knee. He can either get up, clean out the wound, and go on - or he can sit on the ground, crying, bemoaning his injury.

Are you with me so far? Okay... then picture that same child, now a teenager, working up the nerve to ask a girl out on a date - and being turned down. He can swear off the opposite gender entirely, or he can spring back, and ask the same girl again or find someone new.

So far, so good? Excellent. Now imagine that your best friend, whom you have trusted for many years with your deepest secrets, has been telling those secrets all along. Will you hide in a hole in the ground and become a hermit, or will you push forward, and let go of the betrayal?

You see, I was once told that you can let life skewer you to the wall, or you can grab the

bull by the horns. This is the question I want to ask you, as well as the point I am attempting to make: will you be skewered, or will you grab the bull by the horns, and move on? Will you be captive to misery - or will you let go?

Your Focus Determines your Reality

What most people seek in life is not terribly complicated. We want only the peace of mind that is so hard to achieve. To not have to worry would be a blessing. To hope and to dream. To have the freedom to choose however we wish without outside influence. This is the ideal situation. However, life is simply not so. Why is this? Because we make it that way. The lack of these qualities is what makes us strong. As unfortunate as it seems, we gauge our lives by our suffering, and the suffering of those around us. It is how we choose to deal with these sufferings that makes us who we are.

However, do not let society lead you to believe that these freedoms are inaccessible to you. You can get these back. But it is up to you whether or not you will allow another to influence your decisions, or whether or not you choose to waste your energies on worry. Go out there and dream. Dream until you're tired of dreaming. Even if your logical mind tells you otherwise, do not believe for a second that what you believe can be, will be anything other than your future. What you intend to do, directs the flow of your destiny.

Know Thyself

When I first began to learn of the ways of the Force, there was nowhere for me to turn. I had to learn completely on my own. This was the case for three years before I met my Master, Gedi; in that time, I developed my own Code and the philosophy which has become the basis for my learning.

First and foremost, a Jedi must learn to know themselves in every aspect of their being--from the mundane to the esoteric. When you interact with another person, ask yourself why you say what you say, or why you do what you do. Examine your interests, your likes and dislikes. Why are you interested in particular activities? Why do you like or dislike something or someone? If you go into chat rooms, ask yourself the same thing my Master asked me: why did you choose the name you did? What significance does your name and the color of the text you choose have for you? You'll be somewhat surprised at the depth of the answers. For example, I chose the name "Tionne", because I related strongly to the character in the Jedi Academy trilogy. I am a musician, poet, and scholar. I know of my weaknesses, but I also turn them into my strengths, as Tionne did. She could have crumpled when Exar Kun belittled her lack of Force talents, but instead, she concentrated on her strength--music--saying that she would be the one to sing the songs of his defeat. So it is with me. All my life, I have been belittled for one reason or another, ranging from the color of my eyes to scathing opinions about my music. But my music and poetry are two of my major strengths, and I concentrate on those and not weaknesses. As for the color I normally use in either the Cantina or the Jedi Creed chat rooms, it is a medium silvery-blue, like the ocean on a sunny day. To me, that color means joy... peace... love... stability; this is doubly significant, because I grew up two minutes away

from the ocean. Examine yourself closely. The Force is comprised of all living things, including yourself. When you begin to understand yourself, you are well on the way to understanding of the Force.

For now, I leave you with this, the Code I developed over years of training. It is so simple, yet it took me so long to realize:

Trust yourself.
Believe in yourself.
Be patient with yourself.
Keep your cool.

Inspiration

"We hope to inspire you into realizing your abilities." - The Jedi Creed Motto

It is inspiration which creates life. To realize what it is that we seek, the conquest of our journeys. We are inspired to exist and to pursue our destiny, whether it be of wisdom, of courage, of knowledge, or of anything we aspire to obtain. Motivation is what helps us accomplish our dreams in order to become realities, encouraging ourselves to be of goodness and contentedness.

One of our main goal as Jedi is simply to inspire people, to inform individuals of their true being. In connection with being a Jedi myself, I wish to allow for those who want to learn these eleven simple steps for receiving the inspiration to do the probable as well as the impossible. I modestly call them **The Keys to Inspiration:**

Integrity
Nobleness
Significance
Passiveness
Imagination
Responsibility
Affection
Truth
Interest
Optimism
Naturalness

Integrity:

This is one of the most important keys to inspiration. Integrity means to be complete, comprehensive, to be honest of thyself. To be of principle, and to have simple morals of good. As I have said many times before, unity is the key. Yet in order to acquire unity, you must have a common distinction of what is right and what is wrong. If this is not the case, corruption and mistreatment will come from within.

Nobleness:

Nobleness means to be majestic and of high quality. This does not mean you have to be famous celebrity to the public, yet simply to be respectable, seeing yourself worthy to be who you are. Its accepting who you are and knowing that you are unique, distinctive, and unlike no other. If you place yourself in that frame of mind, then you will start acting noble towards others around you... and their respect towards you will come your way.

Significance

Significance is almost like nobleness, yet it refers more to how you insight the universe you are part of. Significance means to that which has meaning and importance in relation to beholding the hidden splendor and brilliance of the world around you. If you begin to look at things in a deeper sense, you will begin to realize the connection of all effects in nature - as with viewing a simple insect, smelling a daffodil, hearing the sound of falling rain, or feeling the breeze flow past you. It is significance which broadens your capability to hold the infinite knowledge and wisdom of our galaxy.

Passiveness

Passiveness means to acted upon without acting in return, to be calm and patient in awaiting for your moment to encounter a spectacle. It is to be nonresistant when others would enforce action. To be passive, you must achieve why you must do so at a certain point in time. If you are too careless into constantly acting upon something without knowing the consequences of your actions, you will obtain the risk of fighting for the wrong cause. Yet if you are constantly inactive, nothing will be taken into effect. You must discover balance between them and to discern how much dosage is suitable for your personality.

Imagination

Imagination is extremely meaningful when seeking inspiration. It is the act of forming mental conceptions of what is not present nor experienced, to create new images and ideas with your experiences. Imagination is the projection of your true self, the picture of an existence without actually existing in relation to a physical sense. This is what completes your own ideals, and expresses them in a way never done before by others. It is finding the want of overcoming the barriers of a falsified reality which gives you the motivation to be inspired in finding liberty and peace from within.

Responsibility

This is another crucial key for anyone who wishes to be encouraged. Responsibility means to be obligated of a function, to be accountable for one's behavior. It is when your way of thinking, feeling, and acting are dependable and reliable to others as well as yourself. To be responsible is to take action when others would not, to take charge of the situation. This comes in connection to passiveness, in which one must balance them self between these two abilities. It is responsibility which develops experience and guidance towards your destiny.

Affection

Affection is simply to affect someone or yourself with tender thought and sympathy. It is caring for something which provides the influence to defend what is right and what is just. Such examples can be of simply giving your attention to another who is depressed, in which you will yearn to help the individual into perceiving a better existence of themselves. This implies to the individual self as well. If you are not concerned about yourself, it will be extremely hard to be concerned for other people.

Truth

This is the core of inspiration. It is truth, the accuracy and precision of the universe which surrounds us and penetrates us, that assists us to quench the understanding of the realities of life. It is the answer that we search for which keeps us intact as a being. Truth will always lead you towards who you are, for it is the key to your fate. Sometimes you must be careful of how much truth you are to perceive at a certain point of time. If you are not, the alteration of your enlightened destiny may be at stake.

Interest

It is interest which gives us the encouragement to carry on. It the want to be of existence, the breath of life, which keeps us in constant reach of our goals. You have to want to do something in order to do anything. If you are indeed interested in seeking what you are after, you will find the motivation to find it. In my opinion this is the basics, probably one of the first steps you must master to receive inspiration.

Optimism

Similar to interest, optimism is believing that this is what is meant to be, in which goodness prevails and hope exist within the galaxy. Yet to be interested in anything you have to believe that it is possible, not improbable. It is to know that you will uncover what you were meant to find, and doing so with confidence. This is what will lead you to success, and to overcome the fears and stubbornness of an individual as well as an entire community which exist beside you.

Naturalness

Be you. Be free from the burdens that are regulated upon you. All you have to do is be in control of yourself and you will find the urge to do more. It is independence and freedom which captures the human spirit, in which helps those to strive become what they are craving to become and to spread it to others around them. It is the naturalness of being which keeps balance within the universe.

I am sure you have noticed how all these keys interact and relate to each other. In fact, if you have even one of these keys, other keys will come to you. Yet you may seem to find that you do not even have any of these keys to inspiration. Well, to those who see it in that sense, I remind them of a key guaranteed to be within them as a being. That my friends is faith. The faith in believing in something will lead you towards finding the first of these keys.

We must constantly remind ourselves that our reason to live is to believe in living. If nothing was to believe in us, then we could never exist. It is creed which leads us to stimulation, to be inspired into realizing our abilities... the stir to fabricate your surroundings into a better atmosphere. Though we might fail, motivation will keep us going until we have prospered. This is the reason why The Jedi Creed has succeeded where others have failed - it is inspiration that will lead us home.

Paper Tiger

A long time ago, in a distant forest, two tigers lived. One was of flesh and blood... claw and sinew... hide and breath. The other was only made of orange and black lines on paper cut to look like a tiger. One day, they went out hunting together. The flesh-and-blood tiger said to his companion, "See that deer over there? You distract him from the front, and I will circle around behind him for the kill." The paper tiger agreed to this.

So the two tigers executed their plan to bring down the deer. The paper tiger began roaring and growling and generally raising a ruckus, trying to hold the deer's attention long enough for his companion to spring in for the kill. But the deer could see the shadows of branches through the paper tiger's body, and knew there was not much more to him than noise. The deer charged the paper tiger and trampled him into the ground.

At this, the flesh-and-blood tiger sprang at the deer's throat and latched on with great ferocity. Chaos reigned as the deer struggled for its life. But the flesh-and-blood tiger won out; he tore out the throat of the deer, thus avenging his slain companion. He let the deer drop to the ground, and padded over to where the paper tiger lay on the ground. "You should have put some substance into your roars, friend."

* * *

This tale is based on a comment a former karate instructor made to me many years ago. To this mentor, I owe a great deal, and pass the same lesson along to you: "Don't be a paper tiger."

The Pledge of Doctrine

We must seek the principles of assurance...

Life is full of promises. It is when someone or something reveals to us what has been granted. There are times when we know what there is to know, though we seem to be apprehensive towards grasping the knowledge and wisdom of the situation. And while we remain in slumber, we rely on the Force to provide us the answers to our existence.

Yet we must also assure ourselves that we fabricate our own lives. Sometimes the answer does not come out so obviously in the beginning, and that we must give devotion to ourselves that we will seek what needs to be found. There are many points of view to discern what life has bestowed upon us which captures our spirit...and by teaching others our principles in life, we find the goodness in which The Force has promised us. That life is a pledge of doctrine. Live the awakening...

Lost and Found

"They say the man that finds his life will lose it, and mine was slipping away. But Oh the man that has the faith to loose it, will find that his life is saved." - David Meece

Sometimes though it may seem that we loose, we actually win. So is it that sometimes it may seem that something is lost, it is actually found. So must a Jedi understand to not be afraid of failure, and if one chooses so, to see failure as passing. That if you never fail and loose some, you will never succeed. Sometimes it is better to fail, and to review our mistakes and learn from it, then it is to pass, and to never put thought into it again. Passing and failure is an ingredient composed within ourselves, and remains part of our completion.

All things happen for the best and are always meant to happen. Even the worst of things can turn out to be the best of things. Another man's curse can be another man's blessing. Another man's trash can be another man's treasure. It is the same for the lost and found. One may seem lost, yet is found. It is all on how we inspect things, and our points of view.

Things are not always as they seem. That is not to say that there is one definite answer, yet to say there are many ways of viewing that one answer. The answer of truth. The same as it with a crystal. A crystal is perfect, pure, and of infinite worth, and as we look at it's perfection, we see different perspectives of the same thing. From one's view of shape, size, and focus...it gives the admirer a unique viewpoint of the crystal. So is it with truth. There are many ways and tales to tell from one point of

view to another, and that there are many points of view we still must consider. There is much more than we already grasp within us.

We must find our own answers - seeing the truth in all things, even from falsehood. Because to someone, to another being, it is crystal clear...and makes perfect sense.

A Simple Game of Chess

A simple game really. A pastime that is simple to learn from, yet it can take a lifetime to master. For generations upon generations, chess has been a game of wonder, of intrigued interest. A simple game where there is only one winner. A game of strategy, never chance. Everything is thought of beforehand, every piece counts for something. Everyone has a price, as well as a price to pay. It can take a long time or a short time, yet it will be finished sooner or later. Patience is a virtue. Every action and every thought--counts.

As with any game of Chess, the Pawns are the first in line and are used for sacrifice. The soldiers. All those in the playing area, or the battle zone, those who suffer first, and take the blows. As with any match, sometimes the Pawn reaches to the other side of the board, and then chooses its shape, or to change to a new piece, when it reaches its goal after a long and hard journey traveling towards their destiny. It can be anything it wants...except for one piece - the king - in which it must defend and spread its glory. It can become a unique piece, to serve a vital function. It can turn the game around. Even though Pawns are weak, they are a must in a Chess game. And somehow, carry an urge of power so great and mighty...that we can never take them for granted.

There are others, such as the Rook, the Knight, and the Bishop. They are precious pieces, yet are willing to sacrifice themselves for others. All having an unique function. All having a choice. All with one objective in mind: To win. They know the rules; they know the risk--and still, they put themselves in danger, all working as a team, together, protecting their King from the foe's attack.

And there is also a Queen. The main enforcer. The one who keeps control, and keeps everything in line. Sometimes it is sacrificed, yet doing so is extremely vital. Yes, there can be more than one Queen. A Pawn has the ability to do so when it reaches the other side. And some, yes some, have done it, even though they seemed at one point to be so weak.

The King. The whole point of the game. It has a simple move...and it can never be destroyed. The King never dies. It surrenders to the other, submits its powers, and changes form. And all is well.

Yes, there are Draws and Stalemates. Yet this doesn't stop the urge, the wanting to spread and take over. And yes, the game can be renewed, as the will of a cycle, and is played all over again. And as with any other game, it is played again. And again. And

again. Until the urge and motivation stops.

In the game of our universe, the battle between good and evil takes place. There is our main faith, The Force. The belief in which can never die, only to be changed into something purer and magnificent. And there are the enforcers and the main pieces...who defend it. And there are those that sacrifice all, and are willing to be destroyed...and risk it all for what they believe in. We exist as one of these pieces of our game of life. And we go on...until the game is over.

Yet the mind has it's own game of chess, where the player, the owner of the mind, becomes and exist as all the pieces of one side. Yet there is another side. May it be our conscience, or another side urging us to do something, our mind goes against this resistance, and your conscience goes against it's doubt. We keep playing, and even when we win or lose, we sometimes find that urge and motivation to play again. Every move counts. It all means something, and we decide who will win or lose...by how we play the game.

A simple game of chess. Intriguing it is.

Oak and Reed

What makes a Jedi what they are? That is hard to tell. If it were just Force talent, then many more would be Jedi. Some beings would say that it is hardship that makes a Jedi. Some would say the exact opposite thing. Myself, I believe a Jedi is the composite of all their experiences, good or bad. Hardship strengthens, true--but it can break a being with the force of a supernova. Love lends its own brand of strength, more like a reed bending in the breeze than the mighty oak that falls to the storm. Yet even the oak endured. Those in whom the hearts of oak and reed meld are the ones that become true Jedi.

This Crude Matter

The general belief of the world is that your body is the real you. This is not so. You remember what Yoda said to Luke.

Your body is a part of you, yes, but it is merely a shell with which you can demonstrate and communicate. Those who have felt the Force for what it is, have no time for concerning themselves with the words that attempt to describe it. Words do have some power, as Relan has noted, but it is limited.

So, the idea is, you should not wince at the thought bodily harm, because it may just come. Bruce Lee called the hands and feet, "tools" which were your weapons of defense. If you were to punch a punching bag and were to worried about hurting your hand, you would not strike as powerfully as you would if you simply thought of your fist as a weapon. Something you are sending at the punching bag. Act with "emotional content", as Bruce Lee also said once. Not with self-preservation.

Simply take care of your body. Eat healthily. Exercise. Keep it in good shape, because doing so, ultimately allows your mind and spirit to heal as well.

When meditating, be aware of your body, but do not allow it to become you, because you will then be too preoccupied by it.

"Luminous beings are we..."

The Land of Nod

We live amongst a field of poppies...a field of dreams. Rest hovers over our shoulders. We snooze, and we snore. All is comforted by The Force itself. It gives this land to us. And if we decide so, we can live here as long as we want. It is our choice.

Though it seems that this is our purpose in life...we find that it isn't. Realize that we must get up and take action. We have been asleep for too long. The Force is letting us decide for ourselves to get up and serve the purpose you were given as destiny, as legend. And all we have to do is grab it from the hands of The Force...who holds it up for us to reach and want us to achieve it.

There are some that live in holes...and caves. Mainly those in the mind. And we sleep, and we rest...and we wait...for something to happen yet it becomes nothing. Like our flaws which seems we cannot fix. What we must realize is that WE are that something. As the Jedi helps others, we must also help ourselves. That is the will of The Force...that we can find the motivation if we believe it is possible. And trust in purest faith. The light of truth.

Okay. My true story...yeah...this is me.

I know in my life, I have lived in many of my own holes and caves that I dug for myself. Some of me still lives in those caves. And yeah, I want to stay there and sleep it off. Yet what is the reason? What is the purpose? I feel that there is still some of me in those caves, squandering parts of my life, in which I take for granted... and I let others become my own judge of who and what I was and is....when I also needed to judge myself...and let The Force judge me as well. I can't let other things restrict me from what is right and what is just--what is truth.

Some are out of the caves. Yet are scared from the caves that they have dug up. And some as we speak are taking a shovel and burying these holes up, wanting them to be no more. Some seem so impossible to cover...and it seems that how hard we want our past mistakes to leave us...some seem to never leave at all. We can bury and mend the situation...as best as we can.

And now, as you read this, I know at least one of these caves inside me are now empty. Since you wanted to read this. And that person is with you right now, in your

mind and in your heart. He is yours now, whether you like it or not. He's part of you...part of your universe. He will always be. And if you want him to, he can help YOU come out of your own caves. Why don't you let him help you? Let him wake you up in the Land of Nod...and help you get up...and reach out to what The Force is offering you. And be happy.

Role Models

Everyone talks about the importance of role models, yet there is little explanation as to why it is so important.

It begins with a vision. Usually it is something sub-conscious. This vision is of what we all wish ourselves to be some day in the future. We all have some sort of an idea what we want to be, but we lack the courage to undertake the challenge of becoming just that.

So, when we attempt to become our ultimate vision of our better self, we run into difficulty, because we find ourselves to be unworthy of grandness. This is when the role model appears.

Because there are many accomplished people out there, we search for someone who had a similar past, and/or someone who is like us in some way. Therefore, we are able to see ourselves as that greater vision, even if that vision appears to be like another person.

As I have come to experience it, this situation is okay. As a beginning. We all need some kind of inspiration, or a boost of energy, or willpower to start us off. After this has begun, then we gain something we call self-confidence, which in turn, helps us learn to be who we really are, and who we want to be, without the false image, or "role model", which helped us get there.

The Potential of Words

Words are a part of connection - it is a way of expressing ourselves to others in a way we can express them. It gives meaning, it gives imagination, it gives warmth and comfort. To understand and comprehend the definition and the meaning of words, of language and speech, people will dare to listen. And will be given hope, faith, and love.

To listen is what a Jedi focuses on. To learn and to heed is our vision. And to gain literacy and to become literate, this objective will take place. To be impartial, unprejudiced, unbiased of discerning others' views. To listen and to recognize all aspects of the equation. The equation of truth.

We talk, write, and express-- yet we must also think before we leap. The matter and the element of illustration is to adapt to the phase and to understand it's angle. It's definition and it's meaning. To the best of our ability.

Others will turn and notice, more will listen and learn. It can tear a compassionate heart or save a hopeless soul. People notice it's flaws as well as it's excellence, and notice it well. The potential of words is great beyond measure. It is a gift to us from The Force. Use it wisely.

Language of the Spirit

As with all of us, we have a language in which we express ourselves. Even though we learn of other languages, we can mostly relate and give more feeling to the language we were raised in or more familiar to. Our mother language.

And just like any language, you can translate it for another language and give a meaning. Even though you can do this, you can never acquire a precise definition. In other words, every word from any language...has it's own and exact meaning. And even if you use the same exact word to another, it may not come out the same way to another. The definition of the words is undefined or infinite...many answers. Same as it is with a language, which uses words to express feeling to someone else.

That is a physical approach. Now think of it in a spiritual comparison.

Think of language as a religion, a way of feeling and expression of an individual...and think of the words given from our apparent dialect as our way of life, or what we understand and fathom, in that religion. And as always, you can learn another language. Yet every word, every form of expression, remains perfect and unique. As with a group of people that speak a certain language, there are groups that believe a certain religion...and tell it to others so that they can also learn of it's meaning.

Religion...or our belief...is the language of the spirit. And as we find our own Creed, we find that we must find our own religion, our own way of life, unique, and like no other. These are the words of expression through our language...that defines it. And yet, to not believe is to believe in not believing. You still believe in something. We all have a religion, even if it is to not believe in religion. You see, it is still a religion.

We have our own form of expression, each and every one of us. We must all find our own Creed. Our own language of our own souls.

Barriers of the Intellect

As humans, we each have a very unique perspective. We each look at the world in a completely different way because of our experiences, and our biases. It is something we should be grateful for. Individuality.

Yet, there is a problem. Along with individuality, comes opinion, and sides to an argument, and different version of TRUTH.

Relan taught me something very important. If we are ever to have unity, we must knock down these barriers that separate us merely because of our point of view. Instead of only seeing a certain part of the picture, look at the whole thing. Come to understand other perspectives, even if you don't necessarily agree with them. In fact, don't agree. Don't disagree either. Just look at it as it is, and the truth will come forth.

You see, the world has become very segregated because of stubbornness, and unwillingness to at least listen to another side. Be the open-minded one. Open your eyes to the world. Remember, though, you need unity within yourself, before there can be unity in the world.

"I say it's time to knock the barriers down. I'm tired of seeing things only as one way. It's time to see it all." "I've been looked down [upon] for believing that. They say I'm not one of them sometimes. Some say I speak truth, yet I strive to see it in them."

Infinite Faith

Long time ago in Italy, a Greek named Zeno came up with an interesting situation which, in a logical setting, could not be solved. He called it Achilles and the Tortoise.

Using simple logic, he couldn't prove that Achilles, a great warrior, could ever win a race between a slow tortoise. Sure, Achilles was physically fit, yet could mathematics prove that he would win, even if we know he will win?

In order to get anywhere, Zeno would insight, you must get halfway there. However, to get to the halfway point, you must first get halfway to that point, and so on and so forth. In other words, in order to get anywhere, even to begin to move, you must first perform an infinity of other movements.

How do we move? Can we prove that we move from one place to another? Zeno gave a situation where it seems impossible for anything to move at all. Yet we move. Why? Do we assume that someone like Achilles will win a tortoise because of our experiences? Or is it believing? Can't we prove something that is so simple and elementary in our lives? A small infant could figure it out by just existing, yet still to this day, the greatest genius cannot prove why.

Achilles and the Tortoise taught me a valuable lesson. Some things, simple as they seem, cannot always be proven to another. Sometimes one has to experience and understand it for themselves. That is when they know it is true. We believe things happen as they do - that is why they happen. We call it Faith, or Creed... to believe in something that we can't comprehend nor fathom. It is when logic cannot solve all our problems. Sometimes we just need to believe in something. Something we know exist that can't be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

We believe that Achilles will win the Tortoise, so he does. Yet we must realize that it is possible that the Tortoise could win, if we believed it just the same as will Achilles. With Faith, we can move mountains - all we need to do is believe it is possible. And it is.

Things exist because we believe in something. With infinite Faith, anything is possible.

Anything.

The All of Everything

If you are not familiar with the term "mythology", then I shall explain. In most myths, you may recognize many similarities. There is usually one main 'character', from which comes the story of a path to greatness. There is also a teacher. One whom directs the main character, or ultimately the hero, onto this path, which eventually leads to either the vanquishing of a certain evil person, or to the level of a great warrior or wise man (yet we know now, that war does not make one great). Yet, many of these are told as stories, and are more often than not believed to be nothing more than fairy tales. Do not make this mistake for yourself. You, right now, are also living a myth. You ARE that hero. Trust in this truth, and the Force, and you will see where this can lead you. We are all the heroes. We are all the chosen ones. Yes. Believe it. You have been chosen for great things. If you choose to follow this path, and accept the opportunity that has been given to you, you will therefore see the grand things in life.

There is an old saying; one that seems to be over used among the Jedi today, and has led many apprentices to believe it is untrue. That saying is, "When the student is ready, the master will appear." The Master can come in many forms. Whether it is a physical teacher, or the realization that the true master lies within, it will happen only at a time that it was destined to. All things happen for a reason, and nothing happens outside of the Force's plan.

Destiny, however, is very misunderstood. It is said that destiny is that which is prewritten in past, present and future. Do not be led to believe though, that this means that you have no choice about the path of your life. The fact is that no one, and nothing can force you to do anything except what it is you want to do in life. Of course, many would use that statement to justify horrible acts. No, you see, that statement is meant to free you from your indecision. Do nothing but what you love to do, and you will see how grand life can be. Choose nothing but love in your decisions, and the rest flows easily. But then what? What of fate? Let us come to a crossroads, just as an example. Imagine you are on the verge of making a very important life decision. Others encourage you to go left, while your feelings tell you to go right. What is your destiny? The answer is very simple. Whichever you choose, IS your destiny. No one

in the realm 'beyond' has anything planned for you other than what YOU have planned for YOU.

Our Creation

The part of this philosophy that most will have a difficult time understanding is that the idea, which you have planned for you, as I stated above, works constantly. So not only are you responsible for the positive in your life, but you is also responsible for the negative. You (your soul) create every situation in your life according to what it (your soul) wants. Of course, some may argue that they didn't want to get sick. They didn't want to get into a car accident. This is true. A lot of the time, we do not consciously select these bad situations. But this is where our thought comes in.

Thought is one of the most powerful things we have in life. Learning this and experiencing the ability that we all have comes with some responsibility, however. Our thought races around the world and back again before you can even finish saying the word. The mind-set we are in determines greatly how things turn out in our lives. So not only can you create heaven in your life, but you can also, unfortunately, "put yourself through hell". So what do we do about this? A little something called thought monitoring. If you have a negative thought, recreate the thought into something new. But right here is where one can run into problems. Let's consider something that happens regularly to all of us. Let's say that you start feeling as if you are about to come down with a cold. The first thing that pops into most minds is to resist it. Resist it with all your ability. But what does this show to the mind? It shows that the cold is there, and you are then admitting to having the sickness, and then you will most likely become sick. If, however, you simply observe what it is that made you think you were getting sick, you will see it in a different light. You will see it simply as it is.

Our minds are very powerful tools. I'm sure that many of you have often hoped for the ability to heal yourself with the power of thought, or perhaps the ability to push yourself beyond your normal limits. These abilities are not far fetched at all, and are in fact quite common. However, they do not come with a price. They take a great deal of control so that you do not accidentally use that same ability to create more limits, as opposed to going past them. A negative thought pattern, coupled with a powerful mind, can be a dangerous thing. Instead of practicing your ability in the power of your thought, maintain control itself first. Practice an ability to control your thoughts. Concentrate, while being aware. For example: if you had the power to levitate things with your mind, yet had no control over any objects, what would prevent you from throwing a rock through a window? Practice keeping "the rock" steady first.

Grasping the Imagination

Why are these believers doing the weird things they do?

There are some people that abetted me to perceive that what I am doing is very demented and senseless, to the point they want to reject my words and teachings

entirely. I myself often wonder at times, when I truly begin to notice and observe the riveting things I am doing. Sometimes it is perplexing for me to grasp them. "Did I really say that?" I often say to myself. And I realize...that what I just said did not exactly come from within my own tongue.

Enlightenment advances from the eyes of your heart, the hands of your soul, and the voice of your mind. Our teachings here are very metaphorical and very soothsaying to the point that if one does not open the door to the other parts of themselves, and look always through the eye yet not with it, they will not understand the eccentric speeches and lectures that we speak of. We are here to open your imagination, in any way we can possibly do so, however bizarre, in order for you to realize yourself and who you really are. When we use the abilities of the Force, and when the Force enters us, causing us to speak and perform things that are so peculiar to another, it is simply wanting to recapture us. Help us understand the mighty paradox we contribute to our fellow being.

We are not about telling the future as much as we are about telling the now. The changes of now. Our soothsaying and predictions lead us to comprehend what we are doing right now as we speak. Are we living the way we should live? Are we doing the right things that will lead us towards a convalescing future? Can we mend the wrongs, and improve the rights?

The Force is wanting us to wait, wait for it call, however long it may take, however hard it may seem. And when it is ready to use us, and mold us into its own liking, we will receive the knowledge and wisdom to succeed in our cause. You cannot lose. It is not just truth...it is the words that make us true...

Ask yourself if you truly, truly that is, want to find peace within your heart, soul, and mind. Do you want to be more than you are? Truly? Don't lie to yourself, for a lie will simply make matters worse as it spreads throughout your being. As a virus, it will corrupt you and it will ravage you. Realize what you truly want in life, and focus on that in everything you do.

I have realized, mostly from some of my peers, that the imagination which keeps me going and striving to expand the goodness beyond the shadows of death and sorrow, that seem to hide in unreachable corners that I can achieve, is vital to my survival. I cannot exist if I do not grasp and envisage the perfection that can exist...and will exist. And is existing. This is why I know I cannot give up so easy, yet evil will simply notice me more, and will take more evasive actions to silence me shut. Though I may be in pain, I will struggle to find the path of interpretation, the ways of wisdom, and of credence. I hope you will do the same.

Grasp your imagination. It is wanting you to understand its true meaning.

Subjectivity vs. Objectivity

Another way of looking at Objectivity vs. Subjectivity is that all subjectivity could be based around objectivity.

That though we may "perceive" that our subjective views of spirituality are right for us, or you, or whoever they seem to be right for, all revolve around an objective essence, in which the subjective parts of this objectivity make up that objectivity itself.

I myself believe that a "path" is different for everyone, though everyone's path revolves around a constant in the universe, such as, say, the Force, or perhaps God. The fact that I use the term the Force rather than the term God is inconsequential, as whatever I "believe" this objective essence to be, in my subjective opinion about it, can only be based around what really is here.

What is here is here, and there is nothing else that isn't here with it.

Now when you ask yourself then, what is this ultimate objectivity that this subjectivity is derived from, you have to understand that this objective essence of the universe is infinity, or rather the infinite. Thus, all subjective views of any truth in life are valid.

Enlightenment

The Long Road to Enlightenment

Why is there so much skepticism surrounding this thing called the Force or Tao (depending on your belief)? Is it that unbelievable? Things happen so often that cause us to drop our jaws and hide our eyes because of their level of disgust or because of their violence. Yet, we believe it because we see it on TV, or hear on the radio, read about it in the newspaper. So if we are capable of believing such horrible things, then why not good things? Things that could, in time, lead to the enlightenment of all civilization. Things that could help is realize what is really important, and to be more kind. But no, most people don't see that. Most believe that such a power is only good for moving objects with their minds, or for influencing people, or for gaining wealth

and power, instead of using it to spread peace, and help others. Power is nothing. What good does it do? It is corrupting, and utterly destructive. So what if you have power for a time? If it has not helped anyone, then what's the point? I see none.

For the most part, people don't believe in such things because of movies, and television, and how their greatness has been turned into science fiction, doing it the greatest injustice. It cannot be bought. It cannot be used in such a way. So much has been lost. So many people have missed the point. They have become ignorant and fail to see the beauty of it. They have lost the way. What is the way then? I don't know. I hope to find it, however. I also hope to find ways of letting others know. But again, few listen. I cannot make people listen. They have to do it on their own free will. If they don't want to learn then why should I bother to teach them? But now I sound as if I am some great teacher and that I know something no one else does. Maybe I do, maybe I don't. There are others who have seen it, who that something lies behind the think wall we call reality. But how do I know it exists? I don't really. This whole thing may be completely pointless. Maybe I'm wasting my time on some idealistic crusade. What is the answer? What am I really supposed to do? Am I here for a specific purpose? What is the point? Should I bother?

Yes. You should. Everyone has their place, and you must discover what that place is. For some it takes years. For others it may take months, or days. You are one. You are your self. Not what's on the outside, but what's on the inside. What can't be seen with your eyes. Learn to know that. Do what you *feel* is right. Not what *looks* right.

Sometimes you must stop and think. Other times you must *act*. Have patience, but do not waste your time. Lead a simple life. Rest when you are tired; exercise when you have time; meditate when life is confusing and let the answers come to you (but do not let meditation have priority over everything else); eat when you are hungry (that doesn't mean unhealthy food); do not force people to do things, only make suggestions; help another when they are in need.

It will be a long road. Take your time and remember what is important. The old Chinese symbol for Tao represents a person running along a path. That is you. That is everyone. Everyone makes the journey. Use wisely what you have learned

Truth as a Whisper

We live in a world where most of us are taught that one needs to fight to survive, that whoever makes the best show gives the best argument. We see this concept in courtrooms, elections, and other kinds of social activities in society. There are some of us though who are taught to accept how things are, never striving to argue with people over something that simply cannot be concluded. In the end, we find ourselves in a great predicament: what is the truth we are attempting to convey with our audience?

I find that sometimes truth comes as a whisper. Although there are people who have

great points of view and hold much evidence to prove their side, I find those who are right to be the ones whispering in a crowd. This whisper, so surrounded by yells and screams, is faded in the background, so faded indeed, that many cannot hear it.

Maybe if we are silenced for a while, we can hear the truth call to us in a whisper. This stage of silence will probably come at a time when we are tired, quieted from arguing so loud that our ears explode, or when our mouths get too dry. Yet what about now? What if we are already hearing the truth, but because we are so focused on the voices that seem to leap out, forcing us which way we need to turn, we can't hear it at all? What a sad thought.

Here is a suggestion. Stop what you are reading, stop the voices that are inside your head, and actually attempt to hear a whisper. Is it your conscious? Perhaps it is God or the Force. Whatever it is, it is truth.

Paradigm Shift

I have noticed when Episode I was getting tiring to talk about, those who were influenced realistically about the Jedi began to take on a major paradigm shift. One of these shifts was the experimentation of other sides of the Force. A Light Sider wanted to be Dark, a Shadow Sider wanted to be Light. After that quieted down, I noticed many seemed to doubt the ability to be a Jedi could never really be maintained. Some began to not take it as literally as they did before.

There was also another shift in views. People began to see things so generally, that ideas began to converge. Only a few Jedi sites are still active, sadly to say, and there are those who attempt to band together to keep some of them from being lost.

We are in a period when anything could happen. Personally, many are simply waiting for something to happen. Many of the leaders in the past have quieted down over time, probably because they were discouraged by the many failures. Many simply doubt their own abilities, which is sad, and began to see the Jedi as an omniscient character. Personally, some of us still have this notion that we have to act and talk like those exactly in the Star Wars movies, and we take its fiction so literally, that it is hard to live by it. Which is why we are having the problems we are having now.

The Jedi has only been developed, realistically based, within a short period of time. Some of the observations we have created are ones which are reachable. One of them is that anyone can be a Jedi if they strive to be. Another is knowing that a Jedi is more about philosophy than it is about ritual.

What paradigms will come when Episode II emerges? I can already see a major paradigm shift taking place at this site. It is starting out small, yet this time, it seems to be more concrete and more steady than the other attempts. Many might come to JEDI and think this is another evolutionary stage for the Jedi Creed. I believe it to be this and more. It is the conquest to gather who we are, what we know about the Jedi,

and put it together.

Our Jedi Realism groups are getting smaller and smaller because they do not understand the importance of the groups. Maybe you can create another paradigm shift altering the course of our small history. All it takes is a leader with a contrasting point of view to spice things up. New blood and new ideas, the willingness to change, the belief in revitalization. This is the only future we can depend on if we are to ever take ourselves seriously.

The Ultimate Lesson

If only we could save every lesson ever taught by any one of us. Wouldn't this be great? Sure. Still, we can do something. The next best thing, we find, is saving what we can whenever we have the chance. Believe it or not, the chance, our chance, is now.

There are so many of us, those who have been practicing the ways of the Jedi for years, who have imagined a moment in time when we would be able to provide a detailed library, full of great Jedi content, for beginners to come and learn of the teachings very little of us were able to experience for ourselves. Some of the original founders of websites have strived to put as much Jedi material together as possible. Why? Well, because we know how hard it was for us to find lessons or texts which held the specific knowledge we were searching for.

I am glad many of us now have learned our lesson - finally, fine groups of dedicated Jedi have come together and attempted to create something great. Of all the material which has been deleted or lost over the years, we now have the ability, and technology, to save what we can.

We ask you to help us not only in preserving these texts, but also by learning from them. When you learn these teachings, you spread them to others around you via your existence. This keeps these precious lessons alive and well. We know with your dedication, we can keep these creative pieces of wisdom alive not only in us, but also in the hearts and minds of those around us.

Feeling Vs. Thinking

Many have ask me something like, "Relan, aren't we suppose to feel the Force? Why then do we apply knowledge and thought?"

Both are important factors of who you are, yet they should be controlled. For example, if you said everything you thought, you could get yourself into trouble...and if you always felt for everything and for every situation, you might be taken advantage of.

The Jedi Code also states "There is knowledge." Yet Jedi, like the fictitious Qui-Gon Jinn, said in Episode I: The Phantom Menace, "Feel, don't think. Use your instincts."

Obi-Wan Kenobi, in Episode II: Attack of the Clones, stated to Anakin, "Be mindful of your thoughts." "Think!"

For example, I notice I focus more on thought and reason than I do feeling, while others, such as Streen, may focus on his feelings more than his thoughts. The best thing for you to do is to be aware of both. Use your instincts when the time calls for it. Feel for those when they need it. Think of yourself when you should. These are gifts for you, and no Jedi should be told they cannot use them.

Some Jedi may be Introvert, those who gain energy alone, gaining individualism and focusing on knowledge more than other things. Extroverts are those who seem to gain energy from being with others, being dependent and caring of other people and gaining precious experiences. These are simply balances of personality and because Jedi believe in the balance of the Force, we should welcome these opposites.

So when someone wishes to care, or another wishes to reason, do not be troubled. Be happy they are using these abilities to do the will of the Force.

Time, Destiny, and Creation

Time does not exist. The only reason we even understand time, is our perception of movement. In walking from one place to another, one can count the seconds it takes a person to move. But in the realm of the absolute, namely the Force, time does not exist, because there is no movement. The Force is already everywhere so it has no place to go.

Think of the universe as if it were a rock. A rock resting on the ground does not appear to be moving at all when perceiving it from the outside. But inside, there are atoms bouncing around like crazy in every direction. The rock is moving, yet not moving. Just like us. We may think we are moving around, but we are all one giant "rock" and really not moving at all. We, like the Force, are already EVERYWHERE. Therefore, time does not exist. Nothing has happened, nor will happen. It just IS. Everything is in a moment of NOW.

Our lives have already been lived. Nothing happens in this world that goes against the flow of the Force. But what does that mean? WE ARE the Force. Nothing goes against the flow of us! This is where a lot of people have trouble with the concept. To make things clearer, here are what I believe to be the Three Realizations on the path to Enlightenment.

- The first realization is that "the Force and I are one". Once the mind stops thinking of Force/God/Tao and the Self as two separate beings, philosophy becomes so much simpler.
- The second realization comes right after the other: if the Force/God/Tao is the creator and creation of all things, therefore, the Self is the creator and creation of all things.
- The third realization: Self is all there is, and is the ultimate creator of reality.

Of course, these may help you on your path to enlightenment, however, they will not reveal the truth to you. You must experience it.

So, to say that everything is predestined would be correct, and to say that everything is the product of our own creation would also be correct. Thus enters the contradictory nature of the universe: two things existing side by side which appear to be opposites, yet are both a part of one larger truth.

Use the Force

The Force is a profound and complex thing to understand. I have not yet even grasped it completely. However, to the best of my ability, I can teach you what it is to be a Jedi. The Jedi's purpose is not to become good in the Force, and to see how skilled they can become, but it is to preserve life, and to protect and help those that need it. Their purpose is not to seek happiness, but to become more kind. Remember, a Jedi does not seek aid, aid seeks a Jedi. The Force is what helps and guides the Jedi to protect others. Only when calm and at peace ~level~ with himself and nature can the Jedi act with the assurance of control. To act from anger would be to succumb to the powers of the Dark Side. Remember, as Yoda himself said, "Once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny." There can be a return to the Light, however. But a difficult process it is, and very few have ever done it. Although, the darkness does not ever leave. It remains with you, to tempt you every step of the way, to draw you away from your path....."forever will it dominate your destiny". One must realize that the Force is not in itself good or evil, but instead it holds a mirror up to the spirit. If one is naturally evil inside, then he will most likely use the dark side, because that is what he knows. One that is naturally good will use the light side of the Force. I have also learned that perception is a key. If you perceive something or someone as dark, without first finding out more about the thing or person, then it may be a reflection of yourself that you are seeing. If you don't quite understand, it's okay - you will understand in time. Remember, don't see with your eyes... with the Force and knowledge at your side, you will see with truth.

The Force is a tangible energy field of sorts. It flows through everything. Everything. Nothing is outside of its reach. It connects us all. Many have dismissed it as a ridiculous belief for fools. Do not also make that mistake. You do of course have the right to your own opinion, but I must tell you.....it is there. In some form. Yet, it has no form. Open up to it. Do not run away, let go. When you are ready, it will come. Everyone has doubts. It is part of our nature to doubt such things. When you say something strange, or new to a person, something they don't quite understand, their reaction is usually fear. If you teach that person the beauty of that thing, it becomes part of them, and they are no longer afraid.

The Balance of the Force

In one of Lucas's first scripts of Star Wars, he refers to Luke being "the Son of the Suns", describing a "Force of Others" which one can perceive and experience. One of

the most asked questions that The Phantom Menace sites have is this: Windu talks of a prophecy that there will be one who will provide a "balance" the force. He asks if it is Anakin. Yet is the prophesy referring to Anakin, or maybe his son Luke? As I view these lives from the old trilogy, I see that the Jedi Windu is mistaken...it is Luke. I've looked at the earlier scripts, and I see an example of my claim.

In the third draft, the one with the quote "The Son of the Suns", Deak, the brother of Skywalker is claimed to be this savior of conquering the Sith to bring back the Old Republic. That is what was spoke of in prophecy to "A balance to The Force". Yet, while captured by Darth Vader, he is seen to not be the redeemer. It is a young boy named Luke Starkiller, a person who seems so helpless forces himself to save his brother, as well as destroying the Death Star, etc. Return of the Jedi is suppose to be the climax of the films, to which Vader is changed back as Anakin with help of his son Luke. This alone proves that balance The Phantom Menace refers to. This is the true prophesy. Where good stares at evil to show to evil what he truly is.

Obi-Wan knew that he was to be a mentor to the person who would provide the balance of The Force, relating to the prophecy. He thought he was Anakin, yet he was wrong in teaching him, as mentioned in Return of the Jedi. Luke though became his hope, to bring "The Balance of The Force" the prophesy talked about. Obi-Wan knew that Luke would prevail his destiny. By seeing Wan's eyes in A New Hope when he died by Vader's blade, proved that he knew the future from the force. He looked at Luke, then back at Vader, and saw right then in there that it was not his fight, that it was Luke who would kill Vader and bring out Anakin. Obi-Wan's fighting would not change this. It had to be someone more personal to Vader, his own flesh and blood.

That is why he put up his lightsaber, and died with dignity. The Force told him that he had served his purpose. And that is why a Jedi exists - to serve his purpose.

The Talent

Every Jedi has a special talent in the Force. It is something that I have not yet come to understand. In time, you will discover what that ability is. You may have already noticed it, but have either taken it for granted your whole life, or have simply dismissed it as coincidence. I know how difficult it can be to believe in something like this, but there is more to us than the flesh and bones. We are not made up of matter. Our bodies are only shells which are used to affect, and react in the physical world. Let go of your conscious self, and truly be.

A Jedi Can Change

I once asked my master, Mitth, if there are so many things in a person's life that can aggravate them, then how do you avoid falling to the dark side? He simply replied,

"A Jedi can change." At first, I was confused, but he told me to think about it and I would understand eventually. I did. If you have also been asking yourself this question, then I suggest you remember what he said - think about it.

The Tin Man

"Oz never did give nothing to the Tin Man, that he didn't already have." (America, Music Band)

What do we consider life...a living, breathing entity that expresses feelings and thinks for one's self, enforcing a decision as well as putting it into action?

Androids, droids, or whatever you may call them...are they living things? They may not breathe...yet they are operational...they think for themselves...they enforce a decision...and yes, they put it into action. Yet someone has programmed them...are they being told to do something which they do not have the decision to override? Yet...is it possible that they have the choice...to be unrestricted from the regulations from their user?

To be free?

Remember the Tin Man in The Wizard Of Oz? He told Dorothy that he didn't have a heart, so he went off with her to see the Wizard. Yes, the Tin Man did indeed find the wizard with the rest of the bunch, yet he was told that he must do a task first before he could receive his heart. Yet...throughout the rest of the movie...he cares and loves others...expresses feelings.

All of them could have got what they wanted without the Wizard. They all had the power...within their own selves. They had it already. Inside themselves. All they had to do was believe...and have faith...and it became truth.

Even the Tin Man had the power....within his own self.

So what about clones? It may not seem moral to us...yet we see them. Are they still human? Do they carry their own individual soul - and only rely on themselves - not from the original?

How about those that are Forced attuned? If they are cloned, is it possible that they are still prone, adept?

Past all the morality of what can be, we find a certain feeling from the heart...never experienced exactly the same way before...as with the Tin Man. And we start to realize...if we are androids or droids...if we are just a bunch of humanoid and unhumanoid clones. We have been procreated, born to live a purpose. Someone, something, gave us our Genesis, whether it be a programmer or a clone original. A user, a creator. The knowledge is passed on, and others can learn from it. A lesson is

learned, a patron...our discoverer... is taught from our existence.

And we carry on.

I remember when I acted as the Tin Man did...and was looking for a heart...a heart that loves and cares...until I realized...it was already in me. Thanks to that special someone that helped me understand that...yes, you know who you are :)

Streen's Journal

Pride is a sense worth that comes from something that is not actually a part of you. It is a false identity. Self-esteem on the other hand comes from achievements that you have made in your life. Pride can be your downfall. When you are proud, you usually are thinking of yourself as what you are not. You become over-confident and you put yourself up on a pedestal. Remember, war does not make one great! It seems that the less confident people have a greater need for pride. This is, unfortunately, because of self rejection. There is, however, a good side to having pride. If it inspires us to achieve something, it can turn into real self-esteem. Sometimes pride can sneak up on you however. Such as people insult others, degrading them, even if not directly to them, you would still be raising yourself above that person.

Before you can change, you must first realize what, and how you are now. Only then can you understand what it is that needs to be changed, and then you can move on. Remember though, if you no longer recognize the reflection in the mirror, it's time to figure out who you've become.

Totality, oneness... can be realized only when you have discovered who you are. You will not flow with what is, if you remain rigid, and you are without open-mindedness. Life is like a leaf floating down a stream. If you push it, it may sink. If you let it be, the leaf will remain with the flow of the stream. There is more in getting there, than being there. The highest form of thinking is none at all. Your eyes are always the first to fool you... don't trust them. To see something uncolored by one's own personal beliefs and ideas, is to see it as it truly is. Art is the reflection of the soul. What is created outwardly, is what exists inwardly, in art. You are letting your soul come forth. It is the connection, or gateway between the totality and the physical world. Without complete freedom in art, there is no art. Those who know, do not speak; those who speak, do not know. Dwelling on the past complicates matters because your mind is freezing. You will only be truly free once you have let go of the concern over how people see you, or what they will think of you. Do not see with your eyes. With knowledge at your side, you will see with truth.

Concentration is not generally the right course of action. When one usually concentrates, he/she creates a focus from which there is distraction. This creates conflict. Do not concentrate, be aware. Awareness excludes nothing. It includes everything. Becoming is a denial of being. Simply let go... free yourself. Not all enemies take the physical form. They cannot be defeated through violence. Many of

the demons we fight take another form. We call them, fear, anger, and hatred. If you do not defeat these demons, a life of a thousand years would be a tragedy. If you do, a life of a single day would be a triumph. There is no truth. The truth that we accept is only opinion. Nothing is known, only believed. The real truth is that which cannot be seen with the eyes, heard with the ears, or touched by the hand.

In contradiction to the beliefs of the Force, our destiny is not prewritten. We are responsible for our own futures. True destiny is what we create. Why does it seem that it's easier to say what we should not do, than it is to say what we should? We have all forgotten where we came from. Nature. Become a part of it once again. One can truly express himself/herself only when there is complete freedom. An artist can fully express his inner being when he has complete and total freedom of movement.

A good artist is always improving his work. Let your cup become empty so that it may become full. Be empty, yet whole at the same time. Let go of, and you shall gain. Become opaque, and you will be clear. Lower yourself, and you will rise. Give, and you shall receive. However, do not give in order to receive. Those who do not oppose, will not be opposed. Good implies evil; ease implies difficulty; soft implies hard. Let go of both sides, and things are simply done. Why does it seem that most conflicts must be settled by violence? Why is violence the only thing that certain people will listen to??

Why does suffering plague the world? Why is it that the ones that care about what's going on in the world are the most unhappy people? Why is it that the ones who don't, are happier? Is it selfishness? Why can't there be peace, instead of war? Why can't there be love, instead of hate? Why can't there be friendship, instead of enemies? I often think about this. Also, I wonder why good people are put through such pain. Some say it is because of desire. If we didn't desire, then we wouldn't suffer for not having it. There must be more to it than that.

Most of us cannot say we don't complain, that we don't desire. I'm not any more innocent than the rest. I ask myself, why do bad things seem to always happen to me? Is it a test? Or am I just selfish? Why do the ones I love not seem to return the love? Is someone out to get me? Do I in some way deserve it? Will things ever change?

Is there a right path to follow? Or do we create our own paths? Everyone says that their way is the right way. Who do I trust? Am I utterly lost, or will I eventually find my way? Is there really a reason for it all? I feel like I shouldn't bother trying. Should I? Will I ever be happy? What am I missing? Why am I not strong enough or smart enough? Why can't I seem to make people happy? I do not have an answer.

Knowing about things, is called knowledge; understanding them is called wisdom. We all fail during our lives. However, it is only considered this, if it is not learned from. You can only succeed if you are prepared to fail. Remember this. Be more... think less of yourself. If you feel that something can't be expressed in words, don't attempt it. To do so would be to do it injustice. Those who know, do not speak; those

who speak do not know. You might wonder that if we should remain at peace, and not desire, and lower ourselves to rise, then how are we to remain social? The only answer I can give is that you must find what feels right for you.

You drop a pebble in a pond... soon the ripples cross the whole pond. You drop many in a pond, and the ripples blend... conflicting with each other.

Some say, "Seek, and you shall find". This is an attachment. Meaning it restricts you to this. This statement implies that you must seek in order to find. This may be true to a certain extent. However, to do so for too long would be to push it further away from you. A leaf is floating in a pond... do you move your hand through the water to bring it to you? Or do you let it come to you... let the wind carry it to you.

Have patience. It will take time, but it will come to you when least expected. Which is more important to you: to have people know you, or love you? To have great amounts of money, or to have great amounts of love? To be happy, or to make others happy? This is something we should all consider. Nothing matters... therefore, everything matters. Those who have little... have little to lose. Life is a river... ever flowing and changing... always emptying into the sea... always being filled again by the rain from the mountain. For one to see the motion, one must remain still. To hear the sound, one must remain quiet.

Let go of yourself... let go of who you think you are, and what you think you are... let go of who you think I am, and what you think I am... let go of the room you're sitting in... let go of the building you are in... let go of everything.

You alone exist. Who is to say anyone else does? How can you prove it to yourself that anyone else is real? How do you know I am real?

When you are walking through the rain, do not wince from it. Do not hide your head from it. Stand up straight and accept it. Become a part of the rain.

Enlightenment is not attained easily. After all, if it was attained easily, who would seek it? If the truth was obvious, who would want it? In the mysterious lies questions. That's what makes things so interesting.

While you should not be the Force's servant, and pretend you have no effect on your own path, you should remember to offer yourself to it. You cannot expect to receive things from the Force without being dedicated.

Brush away the dirt that clouds the mind. Clean it away until there is nothing left to know. Then you will be able to flow freely.

Forgetting what you've learned can be a spiritual act. Let go of thinking so it can become a part of you.

All the processes and techniques you learn are only useful for a brief time. Eventually they make things even more difficult, which is why you must let go. Let them become you. Your body, mind and soul.

Letting go, implies holding onto. Free it, and it will stay.

Instead of thinking about body, mind and soul as three separate parts that make up you, let them become one so that there is no division. There is no separation. No doubt. Then, acting, knowing, and feeling, will all become the same thing.

The beauty of the waterfall is that it flows on without our assistance.

Being of no mind is the highest way of thinking.

When you know how it really feels, you cannot speak it. For the wisdom has no words. The real purpose... the symbol, cannot be explained. Life, humanity, the Force. Everything cannot be taught. It can be shown how it is learned. But not taught. It is even a struggle now to write this after the experience. When you know not how to tell it to another... when you know not how to describe it in your own mind. Then don't. Let it go. That is the secret. The secret of the Force. Something that has no definition, nor a category.

Happiness and joy. Which has substance? Which is the condition?

When discussing Force, a Jedi might say that we are at one with the Force. But there are two things there: "we" and "the Force". To think of the Force, is to unthink it. The True ONE cannot be realized.

Isn't it interesting that there seems to be more emphasis on the physical self presently? This may simply be because we have come to understand our bodies better than our minds. We use such a small percentage of our brains; it's no wonder. But as far we can tell, we use every part of our body. Which is why I believe that you actually are exercising the mind as well as the body in martial arts. The circles overlap when they are balanced. However, a lot of people who exercise and workout constantly don't understand this which is why they end up with great looking muscles that they don't know how to use entirely.

An isolated spider web will catch no flies.

Breathe when you are tired.

Breathe when you wake up.

Breathe when your are angry, or frustrated.

Breathe when you are at peace.

Breathe when you are excited.

Breathe when you are anxious.

Breathe when you are scared.

Always breathe, for your breath moves with the many breaths of the universe.

Everyone needs a hero. The trick is to not become that hero.

To discipline oneself is the way of the Force.

Do not analyze endlessly. Let things be as they are.

After reading, and listening, and training for so long, one must realize how complex we allow things to become. Such is not the way of the Jedi. Sometimes, we must consciously "forget" what we have learned and let it become a part of us. Be simple, and people will recognize it.

Some battles are fought from without. All battles are fought from within.

To focus one's energy, one needs emotional content. However, you must be very careful, for just beyond that lies the dark side. Consume you it will. For once the dark side has you once, it will always be there to haunt you, even if there is a return to the light.

If you feel as if you can't hold onto life any longer, then don't. Stop worrying about everything little thing, because every little thing is of no importance.

Zen, as I have come to understand it, is the cancellation of symbolization in the human mind. Reading a Zen koan, one would find that their mind cannot grasp, the logical has been abandoned, and it would seem as if the ground has been pulled out from under you.

I grow tired of the many distinctions and segregation existing within the Force and the Jedi. Unity is my friend.

Condemn not, my friend, for All is One.

The Sage is a disciple of heaven. Its mind clear and smooth, reflecting the great wonders.

Peace is not met with a clenched fist, but an open hand.

It's better to be a hypocrite and know it, than the other way around.

The Real Jedi Code:

Emotion and Peace are one.

Ignorance and Knowledge are one.
Passion and Serenity are one.
Life and Death are one.

The Mosaic

A mosaic is a picture comprised of many different colors and materials, all forming one picture. A shard of yellow topaz could form the center of a flower, with bits and pieces of green glazed tile for grass and leaves, and bits of white porcelain for the petals. Around that could be lapis lazuli for the sky, and perhaps diamonds for stars. Terra cotta tiles could form the trunk of a tree, or perhaps a rock. Yet all these many pieces comprise one picture, with no one segment any more or less important or useful than the rest. We are all a mosaic. We are all the lapis lazuli sky. We are all the diamond stars, the terra cotta rocks, the green tile grass and leaves, the topaz and porcelain flowers. We each have our own color and texture to add to the human experience. We all have our own different lives to add to the bigger life Force. We are all different, and yet we are all one. Our differences unify us, just as many different colors and textures form the mosaic.

The Perfect Equation

It is The Force, and is comprised of a good and of an evil. A dark side, and a light side. It is part of it's perfection. It is good, and balanced.

It is good, and it is made for a reason. Simply because the balance of the Force exist, it remains stable, and pure. To demonstrate this, I will show very simple techniques using mathematics. Look at it like this:

1. $1 = 1$; $1 + 2 = 1 + 2$; $3 = 3$; ...

Now keep this in mind as we go along.

As with anything that maintains stability, it sometimes gives more to one side, and gives less to another. And sometimes it goes visa-versa to rebalance the equation. Still, even though the equation has changed, it remains the same. And perfect. It's still true.

2. $3 > 1$; $1 < 3$; $1 + 2 < 6 - 2$; and so on and so forth.

Yet, as with all equations we experience in mathematics, it can have many changes and variables, yet the equation, and the balance of it still remains stable:

3. $? - 2 = 1$ ($? = 1 + 2 = 3$)

In other words, the unknown, or the answer we must find out, must be found, brought about and solved to find it's balance. Yet there are many other signs and symbols to

keep it in balance and perfect:

$$4. ? - 2 = 1 ; X - 2 = 1 ; Y - 2 = 1 \dots$$

So, what does this mean? Look at it now, what is it telling us.

$$5. ? = X = Y = \dots$$

The variables and names given differ, yet it is still the same. So is it with The Force. All things connect to each other, and are part of the equation, or part of the universe. And as there are many equations... there are many universes. Many conceptions of the mind. Many ways to see the truth. Again, look at it this way.

$$6. (6 + 1) = (1 + 6) = (3 + 4) = (7 - 1) = (5.5 + 1.5) = \dots$$

It's all true, yet from a different point of view. So is it with the way we believe, view religion and non-religion. We may see things as $1 + 2 = 3$, yet others may see it as $4 - 1 = 3$. And the $4 - 1 = 3$ people say that they are the only true way of telling what is-- and that there is no other interpretation. Is that right? You tell me.

So, we again look at the variables. The ?, the X, the Y again. Put them in place of the 3. So, in this case:

$$7. 4 - 1 = ?; 1 + 2 = X; 2 + 1 = Y; \dots$$

It all equals the same, and is 3.

We see that the left side of the equation is the way we were brought up, the way we do things, the way we see the truth. The right side is what we call it, the variable, the name that we give to our ways of life.

And now we look at it in real life. Mind you, it is the same as example 1 and example 4.

$$8. \text{The Dark Side} + \text{The Light Side} = \text{The Force}; \dots \text{ (it is balanced, and it is perfect)}$$

So, now that we have a key, or a type of legend, let us now go back to what we were talking about. We are going to put example 7 in real life terms and call it number 9. Compare them and see the similarity:

$$9. \text{This way } (4 - 1) = \text{Tao}; \text{ That way } (1 + 2) = \text{Ki}; \text{ This other way } (2 + 1) = \text{God}; \dots$$

You get it. They are all true. They all equal the same thing. They all have different ways of bring up the truth, but hey, it's still the truth. It's the way they look at things. They are all right. All balanced. All perfect equations.

So what do you think I'm going to give you now. The same as example 5. Again compare the two, and see the similarity.

9. Tao = Ki = God = ...

So, as a conclusion, and through simply looking and reading this through mathematics, we find that...wow...it can be seen as truth. All of them. We can give it any name we want, any variable, anything we see fit. Here, at The Jedi Creed, we give it also a simple name, The Force, which is to represent all of them being equal or being the same thing. We are all equal.

Now, for your equation:

10. The Force = " "

Can you figure out this one?

Balanced or Neutral?

This is a subject I have pondered over many times around. The conception between balance and neutral. Balance, by definition in general is a state of equilibrium, or equal relationship, a mental or emotional stability, a harmonious proportion, as in the design or arrangement of parts in a whole. Or simply, to be equal and constantly stable in equality...as a balance for weight.

To be neutral by general definition is to not take the part of either side, belonging to neither...having no decided color, grayish. Indefinite; in the middle, not associating or aligning to a particular side. Or simply, to be in between sides.

For me, this has always been a touching issue for me to face. Since, the Jedi believe in balance, yet I see how sometimes they give the more distinctive meaning of neutral...and not in particularly the meaning of balance. What we call...balanced...is sometimes mixed up with what we call neutral. Yet, I am asked this question: Is being neutral, a balance to The Force?

Again, this is your decision. To what you feel is right for The Force. Yet I believe that it is not the same, as for my own personal meaning of both of the words. This is my own answer. The true answer lies in what you choose it to be...and how you perceive such.

Yet understand what the words mean in your own perspective of interpretation...and to not let it cloud your judgment. This is extremely important, for I have seen those that have suffered for not doing so. This is simply a word from the wise.

Your Life as the Galaxy

One day I was sitting watching a tree as it was gently fluttering in the wind. I wondered for a moment if the tree itself was moving on its own, or its movement was simply the result of the wind. I realized I couldn't tell either way. The cause was unseen.

As I sat studying it, I saw the simple profoundness in its movements.

The tree, as I saw it, was and is part of a grander picture. The movements were just as amazing as the turning of the Earth, or of the galaxy. The Force is of a whole, with no boundaries what so ever. The simple movement of a leaf comes from the same source as the grand movements of the universe.

Punch the air, and feel the power of a universe move with your hand.

A Hero Lies in You

Looking back, becoming a Jedi has been a wonderful experience, and was probably the greatest choice I ever made. It seems, however, that the one thing that had always drawn me to Star Wars and the entire notion of the Jedi, has been the myth.

All religions, and societies of the world have them. It is the mystery behind them that has always intrigued me. The idea of becoming part of some greater, or more dramatic lifestyle, in which you are called upon to be the hero. That is something that seems to be the driving power behind many myths. Which, it seems, is not far from the truth in real life.

I am a firm believer that absolutely anything is possible. Something a lot of people have a hard time agreeing with. But I say, why not? Why can't we achieve whatever we desire? The lesson I have learned as a Jedi is that there is no reason that prevents us from doing so. It is a simple matter of having the strength of commitment. To focus on an objective, without ever straying, can be very difficult. It doesn't have to be, though.

If you can look deep inside, and find your inner strength (your inner Godness), then you will become today's hero.

There Is No Pain

There is no pain for a Jedi.

The more advanced concept of this philosophy (which would be wise to study only after you've maintained control) connects to the statement above: There is no pain for a Jedi. You may have heard or read this statement before, and wondered about how to actually go about implementing it into your life. There are many ways, but to stay on track with the current subject, we will discuss The Void. The Void, which has a very deep connection to Taoism, is what most Jedi ultimately seek. The Tao of all things is

believed to be void, and therefore is the deepest mystery of all: "Darkness within darkness". To connect with this Void can be a very enlightening experience, which I feel can be most commonly reached through meditation. When one realizes that the reality around him is nothing more than an illusion, then where is there room for pain and suffering? The physical concept is only the surface of the greatest being, but is still, part of that great being. Therefore, admit that none of it is real and the pain melts away, for you begin to understand what is 'beyond' this concept: the source of all things. I placed the word 'beyond' in quotes for a reason. See if you can realize (that is, real-is) why.

This Void has a deep connection to our very being. The Void clings to nothing. It is neither 'here', nor 'not here'. It is everywhere, and it is nowhere (now-here). The Void is within, and the void is without. To enter into the Void is a very high level of existence, and is therefore, not easy to attain. In life, being of the Void allows to you be "not expecting", and therefore, never disappointed. It allows you to flow with your very being, and the existence of everything around you. Something very important to remember though is the Force is not simply a void. It is also that which is not void. It is existence and non-existence at the same time. The all of everything.

We Define Ourselves

I have seen how George Lucas defines what he created for his movies. For one, I have study the ways of Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, and all of those kind of Eastern religions which seem to be based on Jedi principles. Yet I believe you should realize something here.

We are who we are, because we define ourselves to be what we are. We are for real life, not the same Jedi who are so wielded into saber fights. We know our limitations, and we do not use the position that we cannot be Jedi because of this or that, or that you are not part of this cult, or this religion, and so forth.

There was a time where a group wished to follow the Jedi ways, their way of learning, the way that they see the Force and how it surrounds them, and with that, they created something rather grand. Not a cult or another religion, yet a moral code of living. For example, a knight at King Author's resort was not of any greater cult than his king, yet had a code of living that was respectable, in which he lived a particular way he found was the best path for him.

It is the same for us all here. We can take the definition of how the Jedi he constructed to the point where we are simply not-existent. This is what non-Jedi don't realize, the fact that we cannot be purely defined by Lucas or his movies. We need to define ourselves. We need to define the way we live and the way we follow our paths. That is why we are what we are.

The Value of Significance

Nothing is insignificant to a Jedi. Everything means something and interprets as something. Everything signifies everything else. Maybe a certain thing may not be useful in what you are focusing on, yet it still is a determining factor of the effects to come.

Take for example, a simple pencil. If you have a pencil by you, why not pick it up and look at it right now. This pencil may seem insignificant, a tool which can be found anywhere and doesn't cost you a fortune to buy - yet look at the value of what it can do. It can record - and look at all the experience and research it took to create the pencil. All the machines and manpower, the tree which had to be cut down, the dark lead which had to be found and shaped, the sacrifices, the pain, the failures and the stress. All of this is represented in the one pencil you have before you.

Now, what are you going to do about it? Are you going to use it? Are you going to keep it close to you? Are you going to remember what it stands for?

I hope you can see how this simple example is applied to everything. A simple "Hello" you forget to greet to your neighbor. The decision to sleep in a few minutes when you need to go to school. When you tell someone they are ugly, or stupid, or foolish...or when you didn't eat all the food which was given on your plate.

Everything connects to each other, and complements each other. Don't ignore the small things, and simply glance at the big things, because sooner or later, you will realize the importance and the effect it will have on you. Later on, you may never be greeted by a neighbor when you come home. You may be expelled from school for all the days you missed. Someone may say to you, you are ugly, stupid, or foolish...and one day you may not have food on the table. Take advantage of what you have, the moments and opportunities which are placed before you...and use them.

Use your pencil...and value it.

Thoughts

This journey, this life, is one of self-discovery. Decide who you are, and all things will become clear.

At the emergence of any new path, let go of all preconceptions, for they can only hinder your discovery. Savor the experience of discovery.

Contemplating the grandness of the universe allows you to gain a perspective of your life as a part of the whole.

There are no limits to our existence. There is nothing that cannot be imagined- and nothing that cannot be done.

Find meaning in everything.

Nothing is objective in the universe.

You do not need to know the purpose of life. You need only choose it.

Your spirit desires liberation in everything you do. Your ego, however, aspires only to be protected and safe. When an opportunity arises, consider from which frame of mind you will act: from ego, or from spirit. We are left to decide which course to follow. Should we indulge our ego and lock ourselves away in a safe little box? Or should we free ourselves from our mental prisons, and advance past old barriers?

Spending your life weighing your options before every step you take, you will undoubtedly drift toward actions that indulge your ego. By being afraid of taking risks you are allowing the desires for safety to seep through, causing a mind-set of self-preservation. It is the spirit that is spontaneous and has no need to consider and reconsider what, if anything, it should do. It simply acts.

Spontaneous action is the greatest joy in life!

There are many opportunities to have more than one life within a lifetime.

Your spirit's desire for freedom presents itself frequently and thoroughly in life. Have you ever had compulsions to act but felt guilty for having them, and then later felt guilty again for not having acted? The first reaction of guilt is the preconditioning of

society. The second is a reaction to not having allowed your spirit to experience what it was seeking.

Do not waste time! Act before your ego second guesses you.

The Totality is that which gives unconditionally, and requires nothing in return. Thus it is the wellspring from which we may draw strength.

Acting upon the spontaneous feelings received from your spirit will strengthen your ability to connect with it and its intentions.

In order to understand what you are doing, you must at times do nothing.

Self-sufficiency is not relying on the opinions of others to determine the path you will follow.

If you are happy with who you are, then you need not proceed any further.

Overcoming guilt is just another hurdle on the way to liberation.

Retaliation is a form of clinging to the past. Move on, or you will find yourself trapped in a moment that no longer exists, and life will pass you by.

Your feelings will guide you along the path if you listen to them.

Role models are a way to envision your future self, but are helpful only as long as you

don't forget who you are.

Ultimately, we all have our own way of life. No two people believe in exactly the same thing because no two people share the same brain.

Do what feels right to you. That is all that is necessary.

Treatise of Unity

Hello my fellow Jedi Knights and Force practitioners. I come to you now because the time for change is approaching and there is no time like the present.

My friends, it has been many months that we have been striving for unity. Something that, it seems, has been just outside our reach at every attempt to grasp it, of which we've made many. We have gone through numerous trials and discovered various new things about ourselves and the nature and purpose of the Jedi. However, many still feel lost, and for that I cannot blame them. What goals have we set forth to accomplish that have been clear and distinguishable? I doubt that many of you will come up with an answer.

I am not placing blame on anyone, and certainly not Relan, whose generosity and undeniable dedication to this cause has brought the Jedi United farther than anyone could have dreamed. I am simply making an observation of the many mistakes that we have been making, in the sense that according to our desire for unity, we have not done what has been necessary.

Right now you might be thinking that I am saying that we should do more. No, I am saying we should do less. You see, by searching endlessly for ways to bring the Jedi together, we have denied the truth that we are united. Not united under the titles "Jedi", "Star Wars", or "the Force", but united under the understanding that we have more capabilities than we have ever previously imagined; the understanding that there is more to life than what has been previously presented to most of us; the understanding that we are luminous beings of truth, and compassion.

My friends, there is no work to be done. There is no goal of unity, because that was accomplished for us long ago. It is remarkably simple to seek out those willing to help, and to research spiritual information in any number of points of view. Accept the extraordinary gift that we have been given, and consequently ignored in the past. This thing called Unity has been with us, inside all along. As my close friend Justin put it recently, "We've been trying to create unity, when we really need to create unity inside ourselves."

That, I think, is what we've been missing. I remember Relan once saying something like, "By creating unity, we will find our individuality." I feel that some of us have missed this aspect, including myself.

With this gift of unified individuality, we can create real goals. Having the Jedi community at our disposal is like having an army of peacekeepers to march into hostile territory. If there is an objective you would like to reach, but cannot do so on your own, contact others. Use the already actualized unity in whatever way you desire to do what is necessary to make the world better, in whatever form you choose. Personally, I have chosen to use this unity to find ways to bring the Jedi together outside the Internet. It is your choice.

I feel that this is all we need to understand in order to achieve anything at all. Shall we end hunger? Save the rain forests? Stop disease? What should we do? The possibilities are endless! If we are to take another step with the United Jedi Order, it should be in the direction of acceptance, to show others that we have succeeded before we even began striving.

Make the choice, fellow Jedi. Let's stop pushing away unity, and accept it for what it is inside us and around us, as how it already has been created for us.

May the Force of Unity be with you all.

Cause and Effect

You might think of this article as a kind of journal entry, because what you are about to read has a great deal to do with the insight I have just gained into the nature of the Force and the Jedi themselves. Call it a theory if you wish, for everything we do as Jedi is basically experimentation with beliefs and techniques.

From my experience training apprentices here and there, and from observing the more experienced Jedi, I've begun to notice a pattern. A majority of the new students come to the teachers in search of something reminiscent of Star Wars, and for good reason. Who wouldn't be tempted by the extraordinary feats of Jedi and the potential to learn how they are accomplished? Most new students, at least those with little to no experience in spirituality, expect or wish to learn how to use the Force for things such as telekinesis and levitation. Unfortunately, for the most part, few of us have any information to give on those subjects. So the students eventually "grows up" and lets go of those dreams and settles with a more profound path, seeking unity with the Force and an understanding of the universe. My advice now would be to not give up that original dream.

It seems many of us, including myself, had defined being a Jedi as having those abilities. Perhaps in the back of our minds we still do, still hoping that some day we will gain the insight necessary to figure out how to use the Force. Again, I say, do not give up that dream. Recently I've experienced some things that would tell me I'm not

far from understanding it. But first, I feel it is necessary to finish what most of us began when we found out that use of the Force would not be as easily attained as we thought. That being, understanding unity with the Force.

As human beings we need a little more convincing of that unity, than say, a potential Jedi in the Star Wars universe, because we rarely feel that unity. This can be developed, but it takes time and training to gain the awareness that we are all in fact connected to everything that exists. Without it, how can we even begin to think telekinesis is possible? It is the belief of separation, of disunity, that everything around is a disconnected part of reality, which gets in our way. It is quite simply that we must unlearn what we have learned. No one can tell you how to do this, because the truth is always greater than the words we use to describe it. It is something that is experienced, something that only walking the path can teach you.

The point to all this rhetoric is to finally say that I believe I have in the past, and very recently, been able to use the Force in the way that I had always thought in time I would be able to. Ironically, it involves the movement of the wind, similar to my namesake in the Star Wars novels (Streen). Several times I've simply sat outside where there was a gentle breeze, and with an amount of concentration, been able to create a gust of wind with my mind. You might wonder, did I create the wind, did I predict it, or was it simply a coincidence. This is where the understanding of unity comes in. It is ALL these things. To create distinctions (either this or that) is [incomplete - continued on 8/10/03] to create disunity, physically, mentally, and spiritually. There is no either/or. There is no here and there. There is no cause and effect, because they occur simultaneously. The 'coincidence' between my mind thinking of the wind and the creation of the gust of wind was neither imagined nor real. The thought occurred at the same time as the gust, and therefore the gust caused the thought at the same time the thought caused the gust. They are one.

Do not create a distinction between cause and effect in matters of the Force. You do not use the Force, and the Force does not use you. You are the Force.

What is our Destiny?

What are we doing?

Why are we doing it?

Why do we become Jedi?

Have we become Jedi just to live like they would have in the movies?

Is this some weird childhood dream that we in some foolish way are trying to create for ourselves?....

Think about these questions for a moment. Done?

Good. I don't know how you feel and I can't tell you either. However, I can tell you

how I feel.

Ever since I was a kid -and I'm young now-, I had a feeling deep inside of me. I never could say for sure what it was until recently. I have felt an energy inside of me near my heart maybe even my soul. The best I could get out of it was that it made me feel, ever since I was capable of rational thought, like I was meant for something great. I don't know how many other people on this planet may have had that same feeling, but I know I have and that it is genuine. Also, I have thought long and hard, even meditated long before I ever stumbled onto yours and others sites of the Force, about what that something special was... my destiny. Well guess what, I asked my Savior and God -I'm Christian- for the umpteenth hundred time to answer my prayers of "what am I supposed to do?", and finally, after much leading on from my Lord and the eventual stumbling onto this and other sites, the feeling of being confused went away. Now, I study to become a Jedi Master and to pass on my knowledge to my offspring and others in the belief that one day, the Dark Times will arrive, and the true "Jedi" will have to fight for real. Think, the Star Wars Movies may have been nothing more than a blue print from the Almighty Himself on what we must do for the times ahead.

Well, that is my story, and thanks for reading.

May the Force be with you....

Good and Evil

Belief about Good and Evil

A belief that the Good can in fact live without Evil.

A belief that the Evil can in fact live without the Good.

A belief, as we see now, that Evil and Good can live together.

You might ask how...

Purity

Pure Good can live without evil because there would be no need for evil...everyone would do what was needed and be happy. Many describe this as a Heaven.

Pure Evil can live without good because there would be no need for it. Destruction, chaos, as well as other feelings would rule them. Many describe this as a Hell.

Evil and Good living can live together in a balance because no one is Pure Good or Pure Evil. Except for in some religions there have been "Pure" people to walk this earth. Those who choose to start leading a path towards "Purity" will be tempted from the opposite side and as their path grows "Purer" the temptation might grow stronger.

A Visual

Picture a, white painted, spherical room. And on the inside it is completely smooth. There is a light hovering in the exact center of this room. Turn it on with its brightness and do you get any shadows? No. This is a visual on the Good without Evil.

Picture the same room. The light not turned on. Is there any light? No. This is a visual of Evil without good.

Picture the same room but with parts of the walls sticking up at various lengths and various angles, like pointy shards. Turn on the Light. What happens? You get various shades of black, white and gray. This is a visual of Evil and Good living in the same place.

This is the simple version of a belief about Good and Evil.

The Greatest Illusion

So many people wander about their lives in so much pain. They push on, just to survive, yet with no reward. They curse the gods for their fortune, and constantly ask "why?" "Why must I suffer?" Indeed, why? No other question is more important. No other question has been asked more.

The answer, however, is something of a mystery to most of the world. A great many people have been led to question their own faith because they cannot imagine a God, or a Force, that would allow such pain in this world. You see, there is a truth, which many have also naturally forgotten. It is the truth of the illusion of reality.

Look around you. What do you see? What do you know is real? Can you tell?

Our purpose here in this universe is not to be the victim's of another being's creation, but to be our own creation. Life is but a simple play, and we, the actors. We are here to create ourselves in whatever form we wish. We are the creators and the created in the grand process of life. We must stop cursing the gods for our misfortune, because the misfortune is our own creation.

That may seem depressing, that we are literally "making ourselves miserable". The secret to end this vicious cycle is to realize what I said above (life is nothing but a play). If you learn to see that reality is the greatest illusion of all, then you will see that there is absolutely no need for pain, and it will cease to exist. You may wonder how one can see past the illusion?

Let go of your perceptions, and you will see directly through the illusion. Looking at something is to see right through it. Just as a person can be transparent, that is, easily seen in his/her true form, you will see right through any illusion they attempt to create about

themselves. Look at life.

Look at its complexities in nature. Look at the simplicities in its processes. See it as the "virtual reality" that it truly is, and no longer will you feel negativity, because you will have then realized that you are impervious.

That's right. You are invincible. This is not clear to those who look at themselves as a physical body. To those who see through this illusion, can see that no one can truly do any harm to the real "self". If you've ever seen the film The Matrix, you may remember Morpheus telling his student, Neo: "You think that's air you're breathing?" He said this to remind Neo that the reality he saw was not only imaginary, but was also escapable in a way that one could break free of the deception, and create a new idea about what could actually be done in "reality". "There is no death, there is the Force", is probably the most important part of any Jedi Code. Death does not occur, only a change in form.

Remember that the physical life is merely an illusion, and you will not only end your own pain and suffering, but you will learn to appreciate life more, and in turn see the ultimate perfection of the universe.

The Force

What is the Force?

It is hard for us to define the Force, for the Force cannot solely be defined in words such as these or any words. To do so would restrict the way it is used and seen. Many Jedi have attempted to define the Force, though we all should understand the Force is viewed not only in words, yet in actions, in situations, in objects, in you and me. Therefore it is open to many interpretations. What we do know is something is out there which determines our reality. It is this we attempt to recognize in any way we can.

In the movies, a Jedi named Obi-Wan Kenobi said the Force was an energy field which surrounds all living things...binding the galaxy together. Like the term Tao used in Taoism, or the universal Ki/Chi, the Force is a concept which can be seen in many forms, and in many ways. The Force is commonly seen as an energy which connects all life as one, for it is a pure energy. Without the Force, there is no life. Because there is life, the Force exists.

Whether one may see the Force as a deity or the order of the universe doesn't make the Force any less or more true, in our opinion. It really depends on how you interpret it. The truth lies in the dedication and trust in the Force. The most basic piece of wisdom a Jedi or any of you might learn above any is to trust in the Force. By trusting in the Force, the Force will guide you, helping you through every obstacle and every turn.

You can travel a thousand miles away and still never find it—because it is already in you. Our journey is all about realizing it is with us already, right now, never leaving us if we heed to its call. Remember the Force is a guide. Use it to help guide you towards the golden path.

Nature of the Force

A Form of God?

Some tell me, "The Force can't be God!" I tell them something like, "The Force is energy which lives. It exists in all things. As energy, it can be as everything, in everything. It can be a spirit. It can be a flower. It can be a message. It can be a thought. It can also be God. The Force exists in all things which give energy and provide energy to all living things."

You see, if you believe there is a God, or don't, it is all in how you see the existence of energy. Some say, "Well, everything seems as if created by a creator." Others say, "All

things run by itself, and maintains itself." Both are saying the same thing, and are really basing their perceptions to be sole facts.

The Force is there to help you live your life, to guide you through the journey you are about to take. It is the sum of all things, it is the existence of all things. The Force is what binds everything together and forms order. It is that which brings life, creates life, maintains life, serves life.

Don't let your past totally rule your present. Don't always let another's point of view conflict your own, because it doesn't have to be. Don't let things get to you, understand what people really say to you, why they believe what they do, and realize it is based on the very same ideas you have. It is their way of saying what we all know, through a limited set of languages which can seem hard to express understanding.

What a Jedi should focus on is the Force. I hope you do not take this name, this title of something which is so describable in many different ways, and tell yourself it isn't there. Energy exist. Life in energy exists. The Force exists within you and with you. Use it, cherish it, and show it to others around you.

Force Yourself

I remember hearing Harrison Ford in an interview in which he gave his own interpretation of the Force when he was acting as Han Solo in Star Wars. It is a very simple saying:

"Force yourself."

What powerful words. In fact, it seems to show much truth of how our world works. The Force can guide you all it wants, yet if you aren't willing to listen, if you aren't willing to "Force yourself" to get up and do what it takes to grow, you will not accomplish anything. In order to be successful when following the path of the Jedi, the unfolding path of self-discovery, you must take control of your emotions and carry forward.

It is easy to sit back, I know. It is easy to be lazy and forget about what is going on, ignore your surroundings and pretend the world isn't there at all. It is also easy to crawl in a hole and hope no one bothers you. It is easy, yes, but the path of the Jedi isn't always easy. Many practices are hard and require your persistence. You will experience problems which will be hard to fix. Yet you must fix them.

Never forget what I say to you today. Always remember, the Force helps those who force themselves.

No Try

I would prefer to compare Yoda's statement "Do or do not, there is no try", to this:

"Act without doing; work without effort." -Lao Tzu

Yoda says, "There is no try", as if it were a truth of reality. As if to say to Luke, "Forget about effort, forget about trying. Just let it happen." To seek, to try, to put forth effort, is to admit the possibility of failure. This way of thinking lacks in faith, which is I think what Yoda was teaching.

Bruce Lee also said this about his fighting: "I do not hit. It hits all by itself."

To let go, to give oneself to the "It", is to no longer need to put forth effort, or try, because... to put it simply.... the Force is with you.

Using the Force: Balance

One may use the Force in many different ways. One method I have found applies the Force to your physical balance. This technique can be useful especially for martial artists, but I recommend that anyone try it.

I've often used this while in a specific stretching position that requires you to stand on one foot- on your left leg for example, while holding your right ankle with your right hand and pulling your leg behind you in order to stretch the front of your thigh. The problem I had when I began using this was that I could not balance well on one leg, while trying to remain very still. In time I developed the following method to keep my balance.

First, you must stand on one foot. How you choose to do this is up to you. Next, relax as much as possible, and imagine that the Force is flowing up from the floor, through you, and past you, as if it were a gust of air and you were a balloon on the end of a string. Keep practicing this until you can feel the Force flowing and that it begins to support your balance and even prevent you from falling over. If you do this enough you may find that in an instant you can regain your balance through use of the Force.

The Force

Its power may seem beyond you at times, it may seem to be an impossible goal to become a Force Master, or even to simply touch this ethereal energy field that is so fabled.

However, we know that the force is all around us, Penetrating us and binding the Galaxy together, to quote Obi-wan Kenobi. In knowing this we realize that all of our actions are guided by the force, and like all things we can do; physically, mentally, or spiritually we must begin by taking those first steps.

Feeling the force has often been described as taking a leap of faith...what this means is

simply to stop worrying about whether or not a technique will work...to stop worrying whether or not you will fall on the ice...to simply let go of all of ones inhibitions and take the plunge...

"You have taken your first step into a Larger world"

Here once again the Jedi Master, Obi-wan Kenobi, shows us the subtle lessons of the force. We all to often allow ourselves to simply ignore the subtle lessons of the force, simply allowing ourselves to look over the lessons behind the lessons, in search of a greater revelation. What we don't realize is like all things with the force, it is not a matter of looking outward for the answer, but looking within, the universe is not all external and scientifically explainable.

When seeking the guidance of the force one must know how to listen, how to quite the mind, the ambition, the hesitation. How to clear out the mental barriers and just be.

To live is an experience most people today never actually have after their childhood. We as Jedi do in fact have a duty to all others, but that duty will mean nothing if we cannot do anything to actually make it happen. Jedi must learn how to "Live" by first letting go of fear and hesitation, of ambition, and of all desires that are created externally. Not the obvious such as a nice house and a fancy car, but much more subtle things, like the desire to not allow oneself to change, to love...to not allow oneself to live for the fear of pain and disgrace. We cannot allow doubt in ourselves to cloud our judgment, we must have an anchor that is even more deeply embedded in ourselves than our fear, we must understand that a life lived shielded by fear is a life better left unlived...

We are protectors of the meek and defenders of the innocent

We live our lives guided by the will of the force

We accept failure as a greater lesson

We accept success as a cornerstone of the force's will

We are Jedi

And our Journey has now begun...

Principles of the Force

First, to use the force, we must know what it is - energy, plain and simple.

Everything in the universe - from dirt, humans, the sky, trees, and even space - are all made of matter. Once matter is broken down to its smallest parts, we have positive and negative protons surrounding a nucleus, thus creating an atom. Everything in the universe is made from these tiny particles. Atoms are all pure energy. Hence, all things are pure

energy.

Energy never stops. It just transfers itself from one form to the next, depending on the conditions. We may not know where energy first came from, but we know it will never end.

Once you have accepted this idea into everyday life, you will see everyone is a part of each other and everything. It is because we all exist as one being. Just like the body, it has arms, legs, hands, and feet, completely different parts with completely different functions and responsibilities. Yet they are still part of a body.

By learning about your own self, you are also learning about others and other things, because we are one.

Force powers can be developed just by realizing what you're seeing. By doing so, you'll see a continuing flow of energy which you are a part of. Moving objects is created simply by the belief that one can do it. You just have to tap into everything at once, realizing the object you're trying to move is a part of you, just like your hand and foot. Then, it's as simple as snapping your fingers.

Reading minds is an art of just allowing yourself to have thoughts without judgment and without personal convictions clouding these thoughts.

Seeing the past is different. In order to see the past, you must, in your mind, put yourself in a sacred place, letting go of all other thoughts until you get a clear, mental image. The first thing that pops in your mind is what you're seeking. However, the key is to not let your own thoughts interfere (this can be difficult). Your mind must be like a leaf in the wind, following the wind's will.

Seeing the future is different, for the future is ever-changing, shaping itself by the will and decisions of people. The best policy is to know the future holds no securities - and is only what we make it.

The Living Force

You may have heard these words spoken recently: "Be aware of the living Force". Confusing, yes? While the Force is the power within all of us, and is what guides us day to day, you must not forget the living Force. No, there are not two separate "Forces". This is merely a way to better explain it.

Life is all around us. The trees, the birds, the river. They are all connected to one another, and to you. You must open yourself to them, and feel life around you. Some time, go outside and look at a tree. Close your eyes and become aware of the tree. Feel it swaying in the wind and listen to its sounds. Open your eyes. Look at the tree. What does it remind you of? If you like, contact me and tell me when you've done this.

Many think that humans are superior to nature. Do you believe this? Has the thunder ever frightened you when it was close? Have you heard stories of the terror people feel during an earthquake? Have you experienced it yourself? If you have, you understand what it is to be humble.

Never forget the living Force. If you do not rise above it, then you will be one with it.

Obi-Wan Kenobi: "Master Yoda said I should be mindful of the future." Qui-Gon Jinn: "But not at the expense of the present. Be mindful of the living Force, my young Padawan."

That is the key. HERE and NOW.

Ways of the Force

There are many ways to see things. Interpretation and opinion give us many questions and answers. The Force can be looked upon as a religion, a spirit, energy, a god, and even the unknown. Fate, luck, mystery, faith, hope, love...there are many names we give to what we experience, a feeling that gives us the power, the want to do good...as well as evil. We must learn to use it wisely.

These ways of believing are all the same thing. The Force is only a name, a name we use to understand that these feelings and beliefs all connect to each other, like a circle, all part of the same thing, as one. One cannot exist without the other. It was made by the same thing...and is the same thing. It is a universe that is awesome and full of illumination.

It is our greatest ally. Our strength, our knowledge, our wisdom. It is supreme. It affects us all differently, yet all the same. It lies within us as well as with us. It is one with us. We are one with it.

A Jedi should understand these ways to understand The Force itself, for it all is a cycle of knowledge that our mind should grasp. To experience The Force we must experience other ways and other points of view, not to be afraid to discern the unknown. To not be bound by restrictions, yet to expand to something greater...to something purer. To know that we all are life forms that bears a soul, and deserves respect and attention. For we are all equal. And all have the right of freedom, of life, and of communication.

The Mysterious Force

They say that the Force that can be named and spoken is not the eternal Force. The Force is that which cannot be spoken of, or fathomed by the human mind. As ancient Tao Masters described it, darkness within darkness. The gate to all mystery.

You may say that this is all new to you. Everything you've learned was completely different from your normal life. But is it really? Is it really new? Or was it already with

you? The knowledge of the Force. The depth of all knowledge.

Did you find the Force, or did the Force find you? Its guidance is there from beginning to end, yet it has no beginning. It has no end. But only when the realization is made once again, do you once again become aware of it.

The mystery behind the Force is enough to keep one philosophizing to no end. Instead of seeking for an answer to the mystery, embrace it. Feel the mystery and the incomprehensible nature of the Force.

When you have no answer, you will understand.

Use the Force

The Mythology of Star Wars. The title of the PBS show scrolled up onto my television screen on the preview channel much like the opening to Star Wars itself. I immediately flipped to the channel and was rewarded with the smiling face of George Lucas. I had unfortunately missed most of the show, but after listening to the conversation with the interviewer, something caught my attention. They began talking about "a leap of faith". Mr. Lucas added by saying, "Well that's what 'Use the Force' really means, to take that leap of faith". This intrigued me. Never in my entire career as a Jedi had I been given this perspective on the nature of the Force.

Let's flashback for a moment. At the end of Star Wars, Luke Skywalker received a message from Obi-wan Kenobi to "use the Force". But what did this really mean? Like most people, I assumed this meant that he let the Force flow through him and guide his actions. However, I've found this to not be the whole truth. Luke was in essence taking a leap of faith. To trust in himself that he could do what the Rebellion was counting on him to do.

Throughout your day, you'll probably have many opportunities to question yourself, and your abilities. Instead of being nervous and frustrated, turn off the navicomputer, and "Use the Force"... "Let go"...

Take a leap of faith.

Applications of the Force

Dark Jedi Perspective

The Force: Dark Jedi

The Sith and the dark side are often confused as one of the same thing. Many Jedi believing that knowledge of the Sith was knowledge of the dark side. Trained and advised against learning of the Sith way, Jedi associated the two together. But have the two merged into one, the question is one which has been asked of the Academy before.

Ancient Sith teachings, written before the Sith were corrupted by dark Jedi, are not as one would suspect. The writings and scriptures tell of sorcery not of a truly evil nature. Yet

latter Sith writings seem bent with evil and plagued with anger against enemies of their race. This is not to say that Sith magic was of a truly good nature to start with. It can be unquestionably said that it is wholly possible to turn a true heart to one of evil, but to turn a whole race seems improbable.

Evidence then that the Sith were corrupted and bent to the will of a dark Jedi? Or are the writings just a natural progression from early dark side philosophy to that of a true dark nature. Did the dark side and Sith ideals meet to achieve a common goal?

These answers are difficult to find, much of the Sith empire has been lost, either through an attempt to purge the evil records by the Jedi, or hidden by dark siders to secure following generations chance to learn knowledge of the ancient Sith. To reach an answer one must go back to a time before the Dark Sith Lord Naga Sadow reigned. Sith as a race still existed at this time, but not as a large group. Sith philosophy at this time dictated that they live in small tribal groups, rarely interacting with those outside of their tribe. They performed magic rituals and spells, at the command of a tribal 'sorcerers'. But can we say that this 'sorcerer' was tapping into the dark side?

This would seem the logical answer, however, could it be that the sorcerers were tapping into the light side. The rituals performed would have to be of a truly evil nature for the magic to be of dark side origin. So could it be that the Sith were using the light side to begin with? This is entirely possible, the progression of the Sith is somewhat similar, yet in the opposite direction to that of the Jedi. Yet any speculation on this fact is entirely unfounded, for when Naga Sadow discovered the Sith they were tapping into the dark side power and controlling it in ever increasing complexity.

So what turned this progression in the opposite direction, if indeed it was heading towards that of the Jedi in the first place? The answer lies during the lifetime of the fallen Jedi Naga Sadow. It would seem that Sadow found the Sith after falling to the dark side. Recognizing the vast power the Sith commanded Sadow became determined to learn how to use it to his advantage. Sadow had learned the subtle connections between the Sith's magic and the dark side, and how to use them. In the most despicable act of treachery he turned their hard won knowledge against them and turned them into slaves.

In this way the Sith became servants of the dark side, and thus the question is answered. The Sith, in loosing their identity as a race and their individual use of the force fell to the dark side. The distinction between the two became so clouded that it was intangible.

On Truth

We are all liars. We lie in every social pretence, in every mitigation of every word. All our ceremonies, all our customs, all our traditions are like coral reefs where dead lie encrusts upon dead lie, which we dust with fragments of living lies, created by us in order to escape from that which makes us feel uncomfortable. Every social nicety is a lie crafted in order to escape confrontation. Every time we say "I feel fine" when really we feel a throbbing and painful emptiness, a longing or lust for something long hidden.

And it is a lust. It is the taboo desire to enter and be entered by something we have lost any concept of ever having existed, something we were alienated and ostracized from long before birth, and whose embrace seems far away.

Our lies are to deny this lust through sticking a veneer over our internal doubt. It is a veneer of vacant smiles, of noise pretending to be music, of purchase power... so many lies, which cannot be listed here, because they have leeches into every aspect of our lives. Our every action is directed towards lies engineered as attempts to avoid asking ourselves the critical questions which we imprison within our heart because we are too terrified to ask them.

Why even now do I need to write in the most convoluted prose? Why is it impossible for me to escape the pretence of being 'sublime'? Am I afraid of being understood? This is possible; to be understood is to run the risk of being challenged and publicly humiliated, and your appearance in the face of the community is, of course, everything in our artificial lives where our role in the community is not based upon interdependence and love, but rather fear of isolation, and the loneliness in which we might find ourselves posing the dangerous questions which we do not wish to ask.

But I believe it is not fear of you understanding me that leads me to craft so much pretentious nonsense, but fear of understanding myself. Because to express it in the most simple way is simply to expose me to myself.

Yes, language is a means of communication; it is a simple means by which we can attempt to express meaning; to explain our will and desires and comprehensions to others.

But it can also be used as a facade; an attempt to explain away those things I understand every time I play a devastating chord on the piano, an attempt to draw the curtains I see myself lurking in the distance as the subjects of a Bach fugue interact.

We are accused of lying and manipulating, of bearing false witness to achieve our ends. This is ignorance; every social act is a lie and a manipulation; turning a blind eye in the name of expedience. We lie, yes. But the lies we should fear are not those visible lies, but the lies so internalized that we forget we are telling them.

We are frightened of stripping away these lies and finding the unknown underneath. But we must listen to our deeply longing lust, listen to that internal longing we suppress. We thirst for something more, and we must seek it. This is to strip away the facades, the games, the prettiness, the kitsch, the denial, the lies. To cast them off and to look over the edge.

We fear the darkness which is over the edge because we cannot see what lies within. Yet within this darkness is a journey, a pilgrimage upon which we must embark; a journey which must be central to our lives. We must stand in the midst of the darkness, and as our eyes and senses become more attuned to it, we will fear it less, and realize that there is

nothing to fear about the unknown, for while there is darkness ahead, there is hope that what is in front of us may be the very object which we as individuals must choose walk away from society to seek.

The core of philosophy is this; we must seek to embrace truth. To see the darkness of unknowing we conceal and risk the journey within requires truth, the complete exposition of what we are, the complete abandonment of all the illusions we hold dear, because they are just that- illusions. Lies whose truth we have convinced ourselves of.

To understand, firstly, and most importantly, that we are all liars, and this is a lie.

Meditative Perspective

"Could someone understand the word 'pain' who had never felt pain?" - Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations

Is experience necessary in order to understand a concept? Attempt to visualize pain. Is the image in your mind of your own experience, or does your psyche create a hypothetical or fantasy scenario?

To go further than Wittgenstein, can someone understand the word pain without experiencing pain AT THAT MOMENT? Can your memory of an experience ever reflect the experience itself?

Bite your finger (lightly). A minute later, try and recall the pain within your mind. Can you recreate the sensation to anything near the intensity of the experience?

If experience is necessary in order to understand a situation, why are law enforcement officials often discouraged from dealing with cases involving people they know personally?

II

If you can, try and listen to a baby crying. Can a cry reflect pain clearer than words? Can the cry recreate the experience of the baby? Can you experience the child's pain through listening to its cry?

III

Shut your right eye, and take in what you can see. Then shut your left eye, and take in what you can see. You should notice that the field of vision each eye has is slightly different; one eye can see areas another eye cannot. Is it possible to say that one eye's perspective is superior to the other?

Go into a room with more than one window. Look out of one window, then the other. You should be able to see different aspects of the same picture. Is it possible to say which aspect is superior? If you were to witness a crime outside the window, would you be able to choose beforehand which window to look out of?

Listen to what a Professor of Music has to say about a Fugue by Bach, and then listen to what a 4 year old child has to say about the piece. Whose perspective is superior?

IV

Consider the subjective statement "this chair is more comfortable than that chair" (from E.R. Emmet, 1964). Is it possible to make this subjective statement objective?

Could evidence make the statement fact rather than opinion?

For example, could measuring the relative density of the cushions provide objectivity?

Could judging which chair is more ergonomically suited to the body through the superimposition of an image of the seated body with an image of the chair help?

Could gathering the opinion of 10 people make the statement objective? What about 100 people? 1000 people? If all the people in the world said that the chair was more comfortable, would the scientist then be able to objectively say "this chair is more comfortable than that chair"?

V

Can anything be a fact, or is it simply your opinion that it is a fact? Is a fact only a fact once it has been proven, or was it a fact all along, unknown to you?

VI

Consider the statement "mercury is a liquid". Is this correct?

Consider the poem "The Blind Men and the Elephant" by John Godfrey Saxe. I give the first and last verses here.

It was six men of Hindustan,
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the elephant,
(Though all of them were blind);
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

(Each blind man, through feeling a different part of the elephant, and I'll leave it to you to work out which, or even better, to find the poem, comes to a different conclusion; that the elephant is like a wall, a spear, a snake, a tree, a fan and a rope. The poem ends;)

And so these men of Hindustan
Disputed loud and long,
Each of his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong.

Are we all blind men? Is it possible for the individual to see the whole picture?

Consider a football fan sitting in the crowd at a match. He has a fixed perspective.
Consider a football fan watching the match from a television at home, with a variety of camera angles. Who has experienced the football match more?

VII

Imagine yourself lying on a beach. What can you hear? What can you smell? Imagine picking up a handful of sand and allowing it to slide through your fingers. What does your sense of touch tell you? What can you see? Can you taste anything? Are any of these senses redundant?

Consider the perspective of a bird watcher ... what senses are important to him?

Consider the perspective of the person who used to eat ice cream and make sandcastles at the beach ... what senses are important to him?

Is a perspective less valid if it does not include the experience of all 5 senses? Is the perspective of the blind person or the deaf person inferior to the person who can see and hear?

Return to the image of the bird watcher. If he hears a rare species of bird and recognizes its call, but does not see it, he may submit that record of a rarity based only on one sense. Would you accept this record acceptable without visual confirmation?

Can a blind person go bird watching?

VIII

Consider the following advertising campaign for a Coffee Cream Liqueur. Two different versions of the advertisement were shot, one from the man's point of view, one from the woman's. The voiceovers are roughly paraphrased thus:

Man:

"The Chinese restaurant I was taking her to turned out to be Japanese! I almost died!
...I had no idea what the menu was saying, I just bluffed it...
...Fortunately, the old lobster gag went down a treat...
...Only problem was I didn't have the money to get us a taxi home..."

Woman:

"He surprised me by taking me to this really posh Japanese restaurant...
...I'm glad he knew what he was ordering from the menu, he really knew what he was talking about...
...Unfortunately, he told that awful lobster joke...
...Then after the dinner, he insisted on taking me on a romantic walk home..."

IX

Look out of the window again. Imagine you were outside, looking at yourself looking out. What could you see? Sketch what you might see looking up at yourself from outside. Is attempting to experience a situation from a number of points of view counterproductive? Does it prevent you from focusing on your own observations and understanding? Is it possible to understand the perspectives of others when the only perspective we can directly experience, through our senses, is our own?

X

If you are not within a person's field of senses, can that person prove you exist?

Maelstrom

The designation of time.

Organization.

Order.

For many these are necessary tasks. For some they are the emergency brakes they apply to a car skidding out of control, for others they have always been there, a foundation upon which to base a life in which all is as controlled as is possible.

Controlled.

Measured.

But for me the controlling of chaos, the measuring out of turmoil, is the restriction of passion and thus the measuring out and rationing of life itself.

The problem is when we confuse reducing the stress within our lives with creating peace within our lives. A stress-less life is not necessarily a peaceful one. Certainly, I accept stress is a great stain on many lives, a blot of ink which runs, ruining every aspect of life. However, to claim that ordering ones life is a way of reducing this stress is a grave error; controlling of the external environment is NOT a substitute for control of the internal environment. Perfect order on the outside only serves to conceal the destruction within. As witnessed by the housewife who turns out two immaculate children, keeps a spotless house, and takes an overdose of pills. As witnessed by the executive of a company run like a well oiled machine who runs a hosepipe from his exhaust in through the window of his car and gasses himself. Certainly we should try and alleviate distractions, but this is no use if alleviating these distractions becomes a distraction in itself.

And it is also a misconception to believe that organizing your life and reducing distractions is liberation; certainly, stress is a manacle, an albatross hung around your neck. But to replace disorder with order is simply to replace one set of chains with another. It is to restrict yourself to following systems, schedules, timetables. And within this order, too, there is stress. It is not an escape from your problems, it is simply a new set of prison walls; where the wardens were once advancing deadlines, final demands on bills, now you are penned in by the barbed wire of appointments and the cell of the ticking of a watch. Certainly, rhythm plays its part within nature. But what gives rhythm its spirit is syncopation. We cannot simply sacrifice our individuality to become computers, robots following a preordained pattern, walking zombie like as you follow your itinerary. You cannot be at peace with the self when you have sacrificed the self.

Peace is not the absence of stimuli. Internal calm is not necessarily dependant upon external stillness.

The maelstrom is a symbol of chaos; it is a cataclysmic whirlpool; it is the storm of emotion, the fury of war. But at the centre of the maelstrom all is still.

For me, the reduction of distractions is not simply unproductive; it is counterproductive. It is dangerously restrictive. For the chaos around me stirs me, it injects me with my passion, it stimulates me, it arouses my creativity. Indeed, to shut off the disorder and chaos, the crowds, the storms and the noise would not offer me peace; rather, it would suffocate the creativity which is the source of my peace. Like the maelstrom, my stillness is not just in spite of the chaos around me; my stillness is a *product* of the chaos. Without the raging froth of water, the clouds, the thunder, the screams, the shouts, the winds, the chaos all around me, without my sitting at the centre of the storm, I would not be able to look within myself, and I would not be able to hear the childish laughter and excitement which comes from passion.

Shadow Jedi Perspective

Path of a Shadow

II. INTERNAL BALANCE

Here is where training begins as a shadow. To let emotions rule us is not desired, for this causes problems that are best avoided. Shadows view emotions as a natural part of your being, but they do not have to be a controlling part of it. An emotion, if not checked, can cause one to say or perform an action that they will later wish they could take back, and become a danger to themselves as well as others.

Additions: A Shadow adept must learn the importance of control. You must harness control so that you have the ability to go from the extremes of both light and dark at any time. A shadow master has complete control over all aspects of the force. You may think this makes the master unstable, but a shadow master remains at peace at all times. This is possible because the master has no restrictions on what he believes is moral and right. A shadow may do light or dark deeds without ever following a light or dark path. He/she moves with the flow of the force in any direction it may go. He can take any action at any time because he has control over all aspects of the force.

Step One: Unlearning

Unlearning means you will address yourself in a critical fashion, hiding nothing from yourself of how you think and behave. This is an exploration of your life long reactions and underlying reasons for your behavior. These need to be understood as you move into the next step. If road-blocks are found they need to be dealt with. By road-block it is meant of a mental nature, a thought that hinders or prevents you from looking at a different viewpoint, or locks you into a mode of action that you wish to remove. This is also a time of reinforcing self worth working with the present instead of the past.

Additions: One must learn that you must accept the fact that there are no rules in life. Once you have done this your mind will be free of constraints. A Shadow Jedi is taught that any action has an infinite number of outcomes, knowing this makes the Shadow Jedi limitless.

Step Two: Grounding

After assessing various pitfalls and thought processes that are of no more use, one must become grounded, and accumulate a basic understanding of what lies ahead. This is to be a type of personal code, gleaned from your personal outlook and that which you know of the Shadow. This is the foundation for future projections, so take care in constructing it, and don't fret over revisions and refinement as you look back in the future, nothing is written in stone and life adapts.

Additions: A Shadow Jedi is taught that any action has an infinite number of outcomes, knowing this makes the Shadow Jedi limitless.

Step Three: Emotions and the Self

Time to make the structure to your 'house'. Gathering that which you have learned of yourself and the ideas of the path you have chosen, the adept becomes an architect, setting the plans for their beings. Life's structure is steeped in emotions and the impact they have in life. They can turn the tide of a conversation into that of a physical confrontation. Balancing them with the moment is a difficult trick, constantly calling upon the power of observation. The adept does not disperse their emotions, nor cultivate them for a reaction. An emotion is to be experienced then and there, upon the time of its birth. Recognizing the emotion for what it is, and not dismissing it, is critical, for these are warning flags like a 6th sense born of the Self.

The Self is that which makes up your being past the physical and conscious state. When it speaks we do not ignore it but take the time to listen. Through the back tracking of emotions, and identifying their root the adept can determine whether the said emotion has merit in the situation, or if it is a product of a personal bias. At this point the adept will determine how best to view and incorporate! that warning, be it through physical representation or as a ! reflective reminder on rules of further engagement. (this needs work)

Step Four: Mindfulness

Application of the above step falls here. To be focused in the moment, in the here and now is what mindfulness means. Forget the past and future relatively for a little while. When an adept is seeped into the here and now, time becomes irrelevant and past, present, and future become one.

Since time is no longer static, all labels no longer apply. Good and evil lose their meaning, as they are subjective to an individual's outlook. All things here are in a natural state of being, no emotional hang-ups. Just one thing after the other to be dealt with accordingly, creating a non-dualistic state. (this needs work)

Additions: Adepts must learn to master the ability to keep there mind in this state, concern yourself with the present and don't worry about the past or future. Meditation sometimes helps this step.

III. PERCEPTION

Here is the final Shadow approach (so far). The Force has no labels, no static 'sides'. To

emulate this requires an interesting approach. Your perception defines your reality, relative to yourself at least. To keep your views from being static, to keep biases and personal shortcomings from hindering you in your search for understanding, the adept doesn't settle for one point of view, but readily searches out multiple ones.

Simple in explanation but not in bringing about into your daily routine. Simply put, this is the altering of how you perceive the world and your understanding of that which goes on in it. This is naturally used in mindfulness. Never look at the same situation in the same way, building on past experiences you have cataloged it in your mind. Feel free to create situations in your head, and practice alternate views once you have accumulated a fair amount observational background. Focus first on! a single instance, remove labels, and work with the raw moment. Here reactions are in a natural state, free of deceit. Honeycomb your mind with these alternate windows of perception, keeping them free of clutter. This is the essence of a Shadow, to be removed from the static. We do not slide between light and dark, for there is no light or dark to begin with, merely alternate perceptions, and through triangulating those perceptions can the actual truth be found. Adding this with a non-dualistic state of being will keep the adept at a state of wholeness in their self, and their surroundings.

Shadow Unity

For the true seekers who find themselves at one with a polarity that drives other's stark mad, you have entered a world where your insights can and will be key to the future of those you both do and do not care for.

We hold purity in our hearts. We love with all our spirits and let go in an instant. Change is our constant. Our inspiration. It is the flow that both sustains and consumes us.

We, the Shadow, must become the eyes and ears of the Jedi Community. The force is within all of us, as well as without, by balancing polar opposites to the point of Unity, we represent the true Nature of Oneness, and our a model for what Unity will become in the greater reaches of both the Jedi and Social communities within which we all reside.

Reflecting upon this realization we must not allow ourselves to get caught up in things which will hinder our connection to change and to the will of the force. Subtlety is a great guide when you can follow its footsteps, do not allow yourself to get caught up in that which has not yet, has in the past, or possibly will cross your path. If you do this you will fall pray to the blind view point which has consumed so many of the ones we love to lives of misery and false hope.

See life for what it is. Help others see this, we will only find Joy and contentedness after the cold realities of this world have come to peace within our mind and our consciousness.

We are the Warriors, the Pacifists, the eternal protectors. With the winds of the Force at our backs, guiding and inspiring us, we will bring change and evolution that will instill a greater peace and harmony, descendant from our perspective of enlightenment.

Perspective and Perception

In the quest to understand balance and apply it to life, Shadow Jedi focus on the concepts of perspective & perception. Many people nonchalantly throw around phrases such as "Perception is reality" and "It all depends on your point of view." Shadow Jedi take perspective & perception beyond these cliché statements to a deeper understanding. Just as they go hand-in-hand, the Shadow Jedi must be aware of the two sides to perspective & perception: the self and the world.

Let's begin with the individual's understanding of the "twins." What is perspective? Perspective is the point of reference that a person takes when thinking or doing. Components that are factored into an individual's perspective may be past knowledge, and observation. In a manner of speaking, perspective is the raw data on our world that we take in. Perception is the spin or interpretation made or applied to our perspective. Take the following example as a base, then apply the concepts to your own understanding:

There are many varieties of sit-down restaurants. They vary in being elegant and expensive to practical & affordable. Regardless, there is a general perspective about service--a server should be prompt and courteous taking your order, bring your food (prepared correctly) in a reasonable amount of time. These are the elements of perspective in a dining situation. Perception is applied when the diner makes a distinction on "how good" the service ought to be. At the more expensive restaurant, one might perceive more attentive service than the expectation one might have for a cheaper establishment. Why is that? It's the interpretation of the situation that leads the patron to have a different point of view.

It is important for the Shadow Jedi to understand his own perspective & perception so that he knows how and why he understands the world as he does. This requires mindfulness, and self-awareness continuously. Yet, though one must pay attention to individual perspective & perception, the Shadow Jedi must also learn to be aware of how this operates simultaneously in other people! How does one go about understanding the perspective & perception in another person? First, though the Shadow Jedi must keep his own "twins" balanced, in this case, he must also be able to transcend them. In other words, the Shadow must be able to set aside his view to truly and clearly know this exterior point of view. It is obvious that a certain degree of empathic skill comes in to play. The saying is that "there are two sides to every story"; there are infinite perspectives and perceptions really. Awareness of that truth alone and mindfulness of it is paramount.

To recap, perspective gives the Shadow Jedi facts, information and data about his environment. The way perspective is understood is based on that person's whole make-up. The perception a Shadow takes on that information is interpretive and instinctual. While one must monitor his own perspective and perception, the Shadow Jedi also factors in that of those around him.

Be mindful.

Control of a Shadow

Control is something learned through practice. The ability to control a situation, control you emotions, and control your actions makes you a strong person.

Control is a key ability the shadow have mastered, and what an adept must learn if he/she ever plans on making something of his or her self. Control helps a person through many challenges they face daily. To learn and eventually master control you must first learn how to react.. You are at McDonald's one morning having breakfast. A man walking beside you has accidentally spilled a cup of scalding hot coffee on to your brand new backpack. What do you do? Control your emotions, I have learned over the years that anger doesn't help you in any way. It causes you to make stupid decisions that you will regret later. Control the situation, ask if the man is alright and treat him with respect. Hey, you just made a new friend.

This teaches you to always think before you do anything you may regret. A shadow master has complete control over all aspects of the force. The shadow master is head strong and knows how to react in any situation. If you feel yourself loosing control do a simple breathing exercise, count to ten, think, then react.

Dealing with Conflict

We deal with conflict on an everyday basis. It is apart of our lives whether we like it or not. Conflict takes many shapes and it may show up when you least expect. What Shadow learn to do is disable and rid conflict as intelligently and thoroughly as possible. This may seem similar to Light Jedi in the matter of conflict leading to anger or other such harmful emotions. Yet the Shadow take it to the next step. Any conflict has the power to affect the future and wreak havoc on the balance of life and the Force. We pride ourselves in not losing such balance.

Do not let conflict control your life. That would be the same as being controlled by anger of depression. It will eventually do much harm if not sooner than later. And always remember that you are the one to decide how long an argument or any other form of conflict should last.

Limitless

Light and Dark Jedi live by a code, they are restricted to certain rules that if they break they become something that they do not wish to be. They are bounded by these rules, and are not allowed to live a full life because of it. My question is, why should you have to live by a code? Why does there have to be restrictions and boundary's? There doesn't.

The Shadow Jedi live a life without a code, without restrictions. They are truly one with the force because of it. From the extreme Light, to the thickest Dark, they are there. They

have control over all aspects of the force and can therefore take any action at any time. The Light Jedi have several limitations. They are not allowed to have selfish emotions. Love, hate, jealousy, anger, pride, this is what they give up. This restricts them from being able to take an action that must be done, but can't. Because of their code. It's the same situation with the Dark Jedi. They cannot express selfless emotion without becoming what they hate.

The Shadows are free. We live in the balance of the force, where there is no conflict, no restriction. We are at peace.

Jedi Lessons

Force Powers

Force Heat

Force Heat is a technique that is aimed at forming a heating sphere around the user, which would serve to protect him/her from harsh temperatures found in many environments. First, how does this sphere work?

Much as any heating device would. It uses the energy of the Force to fuel itself, thus creating heat in the fluid around the user's body. It works best with gaseous fluids as these are easiest to transmit heat to, and draw the least energy to do so. It works, albeit with lesser efficiency in liquids, and is almost totally useless on hard materials, due to the enormous amount of energy that is to be harnessed from the Force.

How to use this technique?

First make sure your mind and body are rested as to avoid any physical and mental distraction. When these conditions are met, proceed as follows:

1. Form an energy barrier around your body, approximately 10-20cm from your skin. It is good to visualize this barrier the color you associate with heat and fire. Make this barrier feel unbreakable and solid. This will help contain the Force energy you will be harnessing.
2. Once the barrier is complete and without any holes and/or weak spots in it, open yourself to the Force. Let it first fill you and flow through you. Once you are comfortable with the sensation, exude the flow of the Force through your body (arms, hands, entire body, whatever suits you) at the same time drawing more of it in, like a black hole that converts the Force into heat. There will be no damage to the Force, as it permeates many forms, including the thermal energy.
3. At this stage you must divide your mind. This is the most difficult part as it requires you to both draw from the Force AND exude the thermal energy into the field contained within your barrier. The barrier once set will remain there for an amount of time, or until deliberately broken, so you need not attend to it. Depending on the conditions of the environment you are in, it will take various amounts of time and energy to heat the air (or a fluid) to a comfortable level. Also remember that the barrier helps but is not 100% proof. Energy will be lost rapidly and will constantly need to be replaced. It all depends on your ability to draw from the Force.
4. When there is no more need for this technique, simply stop drawing/exuding energy. The temperature will drop sequentially, and if you disperse the barrier, it will simply vanish – returning to normal levels.

This technique works well on stable conditions, while turbulent movements of the fluid you are in will make maintaining the whole effect that much harder. Yet it can be of great help when heat is needed and can protect well if there is shelter but no alternate source of heat. Remember, however that it requires great control over the Force and the best that can be expected is a rise of a few degrees Celsius, enough to prevent freezing, but not enough to offer substantiate comfort during low temperatures. Also important is the repeated practice. With repeated performing of this technique, the amount of time required will drop drastically, from a few minutes to a few seconds.

The above technique can also be easily adapted to cool in hot weather.

Force Sense

Much of defense is being prepared. In this aspect, the Jedi has a powerful ally; the Force. Through the Force, the Jedi can sense objects, friends, foes, and danger. This is an essential skill and one every Jedi should try to master as early as possible.

To start, you need to familiarize yourself to what matter “feels” like through the Force if you have not already done that in your training. Sit cross-legged on the floor with some object in front of you—I recommend a lit candle. Summon the Force and feel it around you. Now feel the object. Some may feel it as an eddy in the river of the Force; to others, the object may suddenly achieve a new level of ‘existence’. Others may feel the object as radiating waves. These are all good starting points; try to work until you feel the object in the Force like you would in your hand.

Now move the object while you are still feeling it. Feel how it glides through the Force and what the Force does around it. If you can do this, you are well on your way.

Now for an exercise. For this you will need some kind of ball; either a tennis ball or a baseball or some other ball about that size. Ideally, you would be sitting on a carpet for this exercise so you cannot track the object by sound. Close your eyes and throw the ball in a random direction, but use just enough force so that it lands within your reach. Now reach out and feel the ball. Remember that the ball exists in three dimensions; not two. You need to find it on the X, Y, and Z-axes. Now open your eyes and see if you are correct. As you progress in skill, you can try picking up the ball without opening your eyes. When you achieve this, you are ready for the next steps.

It is time to put this to use. Sometime when you are out, be it in a store or a restaurant or wherever, reach out with the Force as you walk along. Feel the people around you. It may help to envision the Force as a sort of ‘cube’ of energy surrounding you and those around you. First feel the Force near you. Then extend your reach out through the cube. Try and feel where the people are behind you. Try and anticipate moves. If you can drive, this is also a good time to test it. See if you can’t pick out whose about to cut you off. Not only is this a good test, but it can make you a much safer and much more confident driver.

Keep practicing like above until you can not only sense people around you, but sense what they are carrying. Then sense what is in their pockets/purse/wallet. Then sense what they look like. Finally, try and identify them by their aura. If you see someone you know, reach out with the Force and feel his or her Force ‘signature’. If you can do all of these, you have learned the skill.

The sense skill may progress through different stages. Early on, you may just feel blobs in the Force. Later, you may be able to feel shapes but not identify objects or mass. Eventually, those shapes will gain mass to you and you will be able to identify them. Then you will be able to read each object’s signature as well as people’s signatures.

Force Building

Introduction

This course is based upon Yang style chi gung. This may work better for some than for others. Work through the course at your own speed. Add the next exercise when you feel

ready.

Posture

Stand with your feet parallel, hip width apart. Not sure what that is? Close your feet, then turn your toes out to 45°. Then bring your heels out to line up.

Gently tilt the hips forward. You can do this by squeezing the muscles in you bum, just little.

Pull the navel in toward the spine. These two actions produce the Abdominal Lock, which will support your lumbar spine and lumbar-sacral joint.

Lift the ribcage up to give space between your ribs and your pelvis.

Roll the shoulder back, so that the shoulder blades are flat and your upper chest is wide and open.

Pull your chin in (until you have a double chin effect), then lift it up.

The upper arm should always be slightly away from your body, as if you've a grapefruit in your arm pit. The arm will never completely straighten. The hands are in 'Tiger's Mouth' position: fingers together (or almost) slightly curved inward, thumb at approximately 45° out.

When to perform these exercises?

Some say it's better in the morning, as a good way to start your day. I say you do it when you feel it's right for you, when you can 'fit them in'.

Where to do them?

It's better outside, but if you can't get outside, open a window.

Safety Tips

Don't do any exercise on a full stomach. Wait 3 hours after a full meal or 1 hour after a light one.

If something hurts – STOP! Some of these exercises will use muscles that don't get used very often, or will use them in a different way, and thus they may *ache*. This is fine, but if something hurts, it's not!

Ladies during your period you may find these exercises make your period slightly heavier. If you're concerned about it, don't do them

Exercise 1

Stand in correct posture.

- 2) Start with your hands by your sides, hands in tiger's mouth.
- 3) As you breathe IN, allow the hands to float up, wrists leading, and hands loose, to chest height. The arms move from the shoulder.
- 4) As you breathe OUT, push the hands down, as if you are trying to push a ball underwater. There should be resistance in your arms but NOT tension.

Repeat the exercise 10 times in all, then perform the Force Sensing exercise:

Sit straight backed, with your legs loosely crossed at your ankles. Close your eyes and concentrate. Clap your hands together and rub them vigorously together. Now, open them up and slowly bring them towards each other. Remember to concentrate. What, if anything, can you feel?

(Note: it has been argued that in this exercise all you're feeling is heat and friction. To start with this is true, but the heat and friction give you something to focus upon. What do you feel when the heat and friction have gone? Eventually, you'll be able to perform this exercise without it's 'kick start')

Exercise 2

Perform raise hands 10 times

- 2) Start with your arms low (but not straight), palms up, fingers facing. (For the ballet dancers among you this is like *bras bas*)
- 3) As you breathe in bend the elbows and lift your hands until they are at eye level.
- 4) 'Roll' your hands over the top of your head, until they are above your forehead, palms up.
- 5) As you breathe out, push the palms up, away from your head. Don't completely straighten your arms.
- 6) As you breathe in, lower your hands until they are just above your head.
- 7) 'Roll' your hands forward, until then are palms down level with your eyes.
- 8) As you breathe OUT push the hands down, as if you are trying to push a ball underwater. There should be resistance in your arms but NOT tension.

Repeat 10 times in total.

Perform the Force Sensing exercise

Exercise 3

Perform Raise Hands 10 times

- 2) Perform Hold up the Sky 10 times
- 3) Lift your hands up and imagine you are holding a soccer ball in front of your chest.

- 4) Rotate your hands so that your left hand is inner most, palm facing away.
- 5) Breathe in.
- 6) As you breathe out, push your left hand straight up, palm up and your right hand straight down, palm down. Imagine you have a giant elastic band around your hands. You should feel resistance, but not tension. Do not straighten your arms completely.
- 7) As you breathe in, gradually relax the arms and return the hands to the 'hold ball' position.
- 8) As you breathe out, push your right hand straight up, palm up and your left hand straight down, palm down.
- 9) As you breathe in, gradually relax the arms and return the hands to the 'hold ball' position.

Repeat 10 times in total

Perform the Force Sensing exercise

Exercise 4

Perform Raise Hands 10 times

- 2) Perform Hold up the Sky 10 times
- 3) Perform Separate hands 10 times
- 4) Lift your hands up and imagine you are holding a soccer ball in front of your chest.
- 5) Rotate your hands so that your left hand is inner most, palm facing away.
- 6) Breathe in.
- 7) As you breathe out, push your left hand up and out, palm up and your right hand down and out, palm down. Imagine you have a giant elastic band around your hands. You should feel resistance, but not tension. Do not straighten your arms completely.
- 8) As you breathe in, relax the hands and return them to the 'hold ball' position.
- 9) As you breathe out, push your right hand up & out, palm up and your left hand down & out, palm down
- 10) As you breathe in, gradually relax the arms and return the hands to the 'hold ball' position.

Repeat 10 times in total

Perform the Force Sensing exercise

Exercise 5

Perform Raise Hands 10 times

- 2) Perform Hold up the Sky 10 times
- 3) Perform Separate hands 10 times
- 4) Perform Separate hands diagonally 10 times
- 5) Start with your arms in *bras bas* (See exercise 2)
- 6) As you breathe in bend the elbows and lift your hands until they are at shoulder level.
- 7) Turn your hands over until the palms face forward.

- 8) As you breathe out, push the hands forward. Don't completely straighten your arms.
- 9) As you breathe in, draw your hands back towards your shoulders.
- 10) 'Roll' your hands forward, until they are palms down.
- 11) As you breathe OUT push the hands down, as if you are trying to push a ball underwater. There should be resistance in your arms but NOT tension.

Repeat 10 times in total.

Perform the Force Sensing exercise

Exercise 6

Perform Raise Hands 10 times

- 2) Perform Hold up the Sky 10 times
- 3) Perform Separate hands 10 times
- 4) Perform Separate hands diagonally 10 times
- 5) Perform Push to front 10 times
- 6) Start with your arms in *bras bas* (See exercise 2)
- 7) As you breathe in bend the elbows and lift your hands until they are at shoulder level.
- 8) Turn your hands over until the palms face forward.
- 9) As you breathe out, push the hands out to the sides. Don't completely straighten your arms.
- 10) As you breathe in, draw your hands back towards your shoulders.
- 11) 'Roll' your hands forward, until they are palms down.
- 12) As you breathe OUT push the hands down, as if you are trying to push a ball underwater. There should be resistance in your arms but NOT tension.

Repeat 10 times in total.

Perform the Force Sensing exercise

Exercise 7

Perform Raise Hands 10 times

- 2) Perform Hold up the Sky 10 times
- 3) Perform Separate hands 10 times
- 4) Perform Separate hands diagonally 10 times
- 5) Perform Push to front 10 times
- 6) Perform Push to sides 10 times
- 7) Start with your arms in *bras bas* (See exercise 2)
- 8) As you breathe in lift the arms out to the sides until they are above your head. Move the arm only from the shoulder.
- 9) As you breathe OUT push the hands down, as if you are trying to push a ball underwater. There should be resistance in your arms but NOT tension.

Repeat 10 times in total.

Perform the Force Sensing exercise

Exercise 8

Perform Raise Hands 10 times

2) Perform Hold up the Sky 10 times

3) Perform Separate hands 10 times

4) Perform Separate hands diagonally 10 times

5) Perform Push to front 10 times

6) Perform Push to sides 10 times

7) Perform Circle inwards 10 times

8) Start with your arms in *bras bas* (See exercise 2)

9) As you breathe in lift the arms on a slight circle, up in front of your body until your wrists are crossed at eye level, palms in.

10) Turn the palms out

11) As you breathe out, continue the outward circle, pushing the palms down against an imaginary resistance.

Repeat 10 times in total.

Perform the Force Sensing exercise

Calm Breathing Technique

The Calm Breathing technique is one of the first skills you will be learning in your training and is one you will most likely be using to some degree or the next throughout your training to Knighthood, and beyond.

As you know peace is vital to a Jedi, and the Calm Breathing is a simple breathing exercise useful in stressful situations, or when you feel threatened, for it helps you to relieve stress, anger, and tension and allows you to remain calm, and at peace.

Calm Breathing: Come to a stop in activity where you are, and try to make yourself comfortable if possible (depending on where you are doing this comfort might be sacrificed, but the point of this is to relieve stress and tension and that will allow you to be more comfortable where you are.)

Slowly but deeply inhale through your nose to a count of 4, feel the air entering your lungs, savor it, enjoying the simple thing we take for granted (breathing).

Hold that breath for a count of 7, not a fast or too slow count but a normal paced one or just slightly slower.

Then slowly for a count of 8 breaths out through your mouth, allow any stress that has built up in you to leave with the breath.

Continue this pattern for as long needed. With each Breath in you bring in peace and calm, and with each breath out you send away stress and anger. This millennia can also be used and for many of you it probably will be used as a beginning to other meditations. By doing Calm Breathing first you find a state of peace it for later training when you use the Force it becomes easier to reach out to it.

May the Force continue to guide and protect you

Jedi Mind Tricks

While there has been much written under the categories pertaining to psychology, none dominate the volumes of works as much as that of mind persuasion. Rather than give a long history of its origins, all I will say is that its most primitive form began in chiefdom-level societies long before the formation of the Republic, used to band tribes of people together for a common purpose.

Perhaps I should begin with a short explanation of what Mind Persuasion is, or rather as it is defined in the archives. The common explanation is actually in itself a running joke along the Jedi Order. Padawans, upon first seeing a mind trick used by their mentor, are told “The Force can have a strong influence on the weak-minded.” A generation later they in turn pass this message to their own student, both out of amusement and for the purposes of teaching.

A more concise interpretation is, *the weak minded are easily influenced*. These types of mental suggestions usually fall under three categories: do what I am telling you and A) something good will happen, B) something bad will happen or C) it will spare you the effort of having to make up your own mind. This is usually combined with an element that influences certain cognitive or emotional variables.

Yarael Poof, a Quermian on the Jedi Council who has spent many years mastering mind tricks has devised a list of four components for a successful mind persuasion:

- 1) Understanding the thoughts and emotions of the target in question.
- 2) Usage of the right means to alter behavior [correct technique, non-intent].
- 3) Using peripheral factors as an influence.

4) Understanding ones own motives.

One Jedi who has distinguished himself in the various articles and documents is Master Dooku, widely known for his charm and disarming personality. Despite being legendary for his ability to rally the most unsuspecting character to his cause, he is just as quick to advise that the benefits of mind persuasion come mainly when using it with someone who *underneath the level of consciousness, wants to do what you are encouraging him or her to do to begin with*. This might seem unusually simple or complex for some Jedi, but understanding will come in time.

Remember, the weak-minded may believe what you tell them either because they are afraid it is true, or because they want it to be true. Pay attention to the manner in which people speak. You will soon learn that people are often asking you to think for them. Such is the developmental laziness of today's society.

It is not always necessary to change a person's attitude in order to affect behavior. In fact, many people do things that they actually have conflicting attitudes about. You can use this conflict between attitudes and behavior as an opportunity to persuade them to change either one to match the other. Mace Windu himself has made several notes in the Archive records, stating in one section "One who knows what a person wants to hear and how to hold captive their mind by giving them what they want is an exceptionally clever person indeed."

He continues, "However, many a Jedi have fallen to the dark side because of this. Unsure of themselves, they eagerly listened to whomever was willing to whisper into their ear things that drew them further and further away from the Force." Digging deeper into the historical holos, we find that the Sith Lords of many millennia ago controlled the weak minded by manipulating their fear in a very calculated way.

Studies have shown that less intelligent people, when being persuaded by arguments that have seemingly little consequence to them, focus on *peripheral* factors as opposed to *central* ones. Central factors are things such as the quality of the argument, the logic behind the points, and the supporting evidence. Peripheral factors are –among other things- the way language is used, the number of points made (whether unfounded or not), and the way one presents oneself throughout the interaction.

* Why is the manner and usage of language important? Jedi Master Nilrac points out that "Language is the way you control thought, because we *do* think in language. The quality of our thoughts and ideas can only be as good as the quality of our language."

* Sheer quantity can be another means to convince someone, despite illogical, flawed, or undeveloped ideas, a technique often used by the numerous neon billboards hanging high on the buildings of Coruscant. Is more better? Just try and count the number of people here with useless features on their speeders!

* Appearances can be deceiving. They can also be used to gain support. Everything from political candidates to choosing a life mate has been decided solely from appearances by the unwise. Sometimes it's just necessary to appeal to a person's vainness.

Some Masters have criticized the necessity of the fourth and last component, arguing that it is more of an ethical guideline than one required for successful wielding of the mind trick. No less an authority than Yoda has boldly rebutted, "Mysteries of the heart, there are. Difficult to see, in others... more difficult even, to understand ourselves. When experience things we do pure in heart, others, their intentions more clearly will we see."

The advanced Jedi will soon come to realize that the highest form of persuasion comes from those who are themselves transparently noble and virtuous. By representing one that others wish to aspire to, one is in effect tapping into their psyche in a way words cannot express.

Jedi Lessons

Effective Verbal Communication

Effective Verbal Communication: Basic Premises

Premise 1

Effective verbal communication happens when each person involved ...

Gets enough of their current true needs met (by their definition), in a way that leaves them feeling good enough about themselves, all others involved, and the processes in and among them.

Because definitions of "enough" vary by person and circumstance, people's definitions of "effective verbal communications" vary widely. What you feel is effective may not match my definition. We both are "right". The definition that counts is what we both believe right now.

Premise 2

We communicate with ourselves and other people to fill current inner tensions, or needs. The 6 current needs we try to fill are to ...

feel respected by Self and others present (a constant need in all participants); and...
to give or get credible information; and/or ...
to cause or prevent inner and/or interpersonal change - including changing or maintaining the
emotional distance between us and others; and/or...
to vent - i.e. to feel deeply understood and accepted (vs. to get "fixed"); and/or...
to reduce or avoid uncomfortable interpersonal silence, and ...
to feel stimulated vs. bored, and/or to avoid something uncomfortable.

All 6 of these aim to reduce current inner anxiety, and to increase comfort, security, and satisfaction. Stop for a moment, and ponder: are there any other basic reasons you communicate with other people ? If so, add them to this list. Now you have a solid base from which to decide "are we communicating effectively ?"

Premise 3

We each usually have at least 2 of these 6 needs at once, because the need for Self and mutual respect is pretty constant. Our combined mixes of inner and mutual needs can vary quickly as we communicate, and as our inner and outer environments change. Thus awareness of our respective needs and dynamics is a key communication skill. Are you usually aware of why you communicate ?

Premise 4

Effective verbal communication happens when all people's current needs match well enough- e.g. I need to vent, and you need to maintain our relationship, and get information (about me). When our respective communication (vs. other) needs don't match, we have a mutual communications "problem." To make things more interesting, each of us may have conflicting communication (and other) needs within ourselves at the moment !

Premise 5

Face to face, we communicate simultaneously on 3 "channels":

spoken or written words;
voice dynamics (tone + tempo + inflection + accent + non-word sounds); and...
Face and body ("non-verbal communication", or "face and body language").

Face to face, most of the meaning we decode from our partners comes through our eyes (!)

-

Specially R(espect)-messages (below). Often the least impactful meaning we exchange comes from our words - but we're taught from childhood to focus on them the most.
(Sound familiar ?)

Premise 6

We try to get two or more current needs met by exchanging up to 4 simultaneous messages on each of our 3 channels: "Right now, ...

I feel ...";
I need ...";
I think ..."; and ...
relative to me, I see you as ..."

This last can be called an "R"(espect)-message. I believe it is the most critical of the four. It's usually sent and received ("decoded") unconsciously, and controls the success of every spoken and unspoken communication exchange.

R-messages have 3 basic decodings: "Here and now, you (seem to) value your needs, worth, and dignity...

- 1) ... more than mine (so you're 1-up, I'm 1-down)";
- 2) ... less than mine (you're 1-down, I'm 1-up)"; or ...
- 3) ... equally with mine (we're "= / =", or "of equal respect," here.)

Premise 7

Effective verbal communications happen only when all people consistently decode clear "= / =" R-messages, on all 3 channels. A key implication: shame-based ("1-down") co-burdened by personality splitting often have trouble communicating effectively until they improve their self-esteem ("promote themselves to equal"). My clinical experience since 1981 is that ~80+% of typical stepfamily co-parents (including ex mates) are such people.

Because they feel 1-down, shame-based co-parents often unconsciously distort reality by decoding incoming "= / =" R-messages as attacks and put-downs ("you see me now as 1-down"). You can talk with such people about this (if they're willing) - but they must

change their own consistent self-respect attitude to "I'm your equal." This is a key to true (vs. pseudo) recovery from personality splitting - co-parent project 1.

Premise 8

Many of the messages we both send and decode are unconscious. We "leak" our true feelings and attitudes all the time, and often send conflicting messages via different channels (e.g. words: "good to see you !"; Body, face, and tone: "I'm indifferent to you, just now"). If motivated, anyone can become steadily more conscious of our (and others') needs, feelings, and multiple simultaneous messages via growing the communication skill of awareness.

Paradoxically, communication is the skill we depend on the most to get our daily interpersonal needs met - yet few of us ever really study how we do it, or learn what's possible. (Have you ever studied it ?)

Premise 9

It's impossible to not communicate with people we "relate" to. We each decode meanings from silences and absences as much as we do from talking and other non-verbal actions.

Premise 10

Verbal communication skills and effectiveness can be improved, over time - any time. Like playing an instrument, communicating "well" takes motivation, patience, and practice.

Premise 11

Effective verbal communication requires awareness's and a committed, cooperative effort among all people involved - so it is not always possible at the moment, unless all people voluntarily contribute these. Do you agree?

~Fear is the absence of faith~

Persuasion

Direct:

In the Star Wars movies, we see examples of Jedi who use persuasion to change the attitudes and behavior of others. This topic will cover ways in which Jedi directly attempt to persuade people. This discussion is for JCP students only.

In A New Hope, we are introduced to the infamous Jedi Mind Trick, when Obi-Wan waves his hand, and characters suddenly do and say what he wants. What do you think it says about Western culture that movie writers create characters that have this power? If you had the power of the Jedi Mind Trick, how would you use it? What, if any, ethical dilemmas might you face?

In Return of the Jedi, Luke faces his father, Darth Vader, aboard the second Death Star. Luke tries to persuade his father to return to the light side by refusing to fight him. Luke eventually succeeds, but not necessarily in the way he intended... How was Darth Vader persuaded? Is there a difference in the efficacy of emotional and intellectual persuasion? Which do you prefer?

When Luke goes to Jabba the Hut's palace to rescue Han Solo, he threatens Jabba in an attempt to persuade him to free Luke's friend. Jabba was not persuaded; Luke was forced to fight. Are threats a useful form of persuasion? Should Jedi ever make empty threats in an attempt to bluff their opponents?

I look forward to reading your posts.

Indirect:

This topic is meant to discuss indirect forms of persuasion. Instead of focusing on how Jedi try to persuade other people, as in the direct persuasion thread, I would like to discuss how Jedi are persuaded by other people. Topics can include the need to justify our actions, attitude changes, advertising, the need to be accepted, attraction, prejudice, etc. This discussion is for JCP students only.

I'd like to start by examining our beliefs about individuality.

Did you ever notice that major Star Wars characters are usually misfits and mavericks? Han Solo had a bounty on his head, Yoda was a hermit, Leia was an insurrectionist, and Qui-Gon was stubborn. Western culture tends to praise individuality. In general, how important do you think it is to be an individual? How much do you think other people influence your behavior and attitudes? Does advertising work on you, or other people? Have you noticed any cultural differences in the value placed on individuality? Are Jedi influenced by other people more or less than non-Jedi?

How to See an Aura

Find someone who is a willing subject and ask them to sit on a stool in front of a plain white wall. A stool is recommended because you want to be able to see the back of their head without the back of a chair interfering. Have the subject sit sideways on the stool so that you are looking at their profile. Look at the back of their head, then look at the wall behind their head, now let your eyes relax and do not look directly at their head anymore, look next to their head where it ends with the wall. Within a minute, you will see their

aura.

Once you see their aura, ask them to close their eyes and to think of something that makes them really happy, when they do this, you will see their aura level extend outward significantly. You will also see when they stop thinking of the happy thought, as the aura will shrink back down in size. At first, you may only see a light color or muted color, do not worry. The more your practice, the more you will grow and then begin to see the colors around the person's body.

There is a life force, an energy field surrounding every living thing on earth. Researchers have announced the existence of this field; the Kirlian camera captures its color and motion. Yale researchers have determined that disease can be detected in the aura before it manifests in the physical body. The colors seen in one's aura can be associated with the colors of the chakras and energy levels can be detected through careful study of the aura with the chakra color. You can also read the auric levels of plants, trees, animals, any living object on the earth can be read.

Remember, we are all energy beings surrounded and enveloped in various degrees of energy and motion.

Circling Palms

This experiment can help you understand the principles of transmitting therapeutic energy.

Ask a friend to hold out his left hand, palm up. Place your right hand a few inches above his hand, finding the distance that allows maximum Qi sensation. Now as your partner's hand remains still, slowly rotate your right hand in tiny counter-clockwise circles, as though the center of your palm is a laser beam, drawing a circle around your friend's palm. Then increase the circumference of your circle, so that your palm is shining light on each of your partner's fingertips and then moving down to the top of the wrist. After several circles, reverse direction, circling clockwise. Ask your friend what he or she felt. What sensation is produced by counterclockwise circles, what sensation by clockwise circles?

Magnetic Hands

Sit comfortably in a straight-backed chair, or cross-legged on the floor. Relax through a few deep breaths.

Lightly and briefly rub your palms together. You should begin to notice a slight warming or tingling sensation. Slowly separate your palms, still facing each other, three or four inches apart. Move your palms back together, within a half inch of each other. Continue to slowly move your palms forward and back, feeling for any resistance, heat, or stimulation between them.

There will come a point in this exercise where you will notice a tangible energy between your palms whenever your hands reach a certain distance apart. I find the sensation

similar to that of feeling the poles of magnets repelling each other.

What you are feeling between your hands is the Force. By building up the Force within you and learning to manipulate it, you can create change in your life.

After practicing this exercise regularly, it will become unnecessary to rub your palms together before starting. Eventually, even calling the Force between your palms will become second nature, and the act of bringing together your palms will automatically release the Force.

This exercise also works well with two people facing each other, palms to palms. After rubbing your own hands together, face palm to palm with your partner until you both sense each-other's auras. This can be an excellent way to create a bond with your partner.

Awakening Force Awareness

Preparation:

Loose fitting clothing, not done right after a meal, coffee or alcohol. A glass of water is ok. Keep your feet warm, nothing tight. Stand still for 5 minutes, hands touching your stomach just below the belly button. Relax breath deeply and slowly through your nose, when you inhale your stomach expands and when you exhale your stomach is pulled in.

Experiment Step One:

While standing, rub your palms together until they are warm from friction. Clap your hands together about a dozen times. Shake your hands out for a few seconds at your sides. You may experience tingling in your hands.

Hold your hands in front of you, about 6 inches apart. Matching fingers pointing to each other, thumbs pointing at thumbs.

Hold your hands there as long as you can until you feel a sensation, relaxed not worrying about quick results. Be aware of the sensations traveling through the airspace between your hands. It may feel like soft pulsations, like a soft wind, or mild static electricity. Most likely you will feel a tingling sensation in your hands. You are becoming aware of your connection to the Force.

Experiment Step Two:

As always breathe smoothly and deeply, position hands palms facing each other, slowly raise hands to the chest level. Slowly move your palms so that they almost meet, slowly move your palms away 6". Concentrate on the energy between your hands.

As you do that, do you feel any sensation in your hands? The feeling of the Force is like a

light wind or opposing magnetism, your hands may slightly repel each other.

With deep slow breathing you can increase the strength and size of the energy field. Imagine with each inhaled breath you are taking in energy, with each exhale you are sending energy from the right hand to the left hand.

The size and density of the field increases with the amount of internal strength you have, at first your fingers are a few inches apart, energy flowing from finger tips to finger tips. Later your hands are three feet apart, and it really feels like you are holding a beach ball, with real form, as you squeeze it, you feel it press on your chest. It reacts just like a ball and the feeling is much stronger when done standing than sitting.

The Force follows the mind:

The amazing thing is that you can direct the Force to anywhere you would like it to go. At first you will be able to direct it through the body, the Force follows the intent. If you imagine it going up your back over your head and resting on your nose, it will follow the point that you intend.

Note - If there seems to be a delay it may be a few inches behind your intention.

How to Protect Yourself from the Feelings of Others

The following are a range of visualizations you can use to protect yourself from the feelings of others. Whether you believe yourself to be an empath or not they can be quite helpful.

Some of the following are best done before you go out, sitting quietly and visualizing whichever seems most appropriate. While you are using your imagination you may be surprised at how well they can work. Others it is a question of checking in your minds eye during the day, if you start to feel troubled. Some you can do when you get home. There is no formula, just working out what is best for you.

1 The cloak, the light or the egg. If you visualize one of these around you, you can remain empathic, i.e. aware of what others are feeling, but also not be engaged in them. Love and suchlike gets straight through. When I first discovered this and was still in London I used to find that on examining my cloak after I had been amongst a lot of people that it was all tattered and torn, and I had to repair it, but it worked.

2. The coat hooks. Often, as I'm sure you are aware, it can be hard to tell which feelings are yours and which belong to someone else. If you visualize a row of coat hooks, as in a school cloakroom, and look there when you are unsure, if there is anything on those hooks then you are carrying the feelings of someone else. I tend to take the coat from the hook, and gently and lovingly imagine I am returning the coat or whatever to its rightful owner.

3. The sink. Sometimes I have picked up bits and pieces from others throughout the day, nothing large or devastating, just bits of rubbish. These can build unnoticed for some time. These things go in a sink (well you can imagine they do). Check your sink from time to time, and if it has stuff in simply pull the plug out and it all drains away. It doesn't need examining. I really don't think other people's stuff can be effectively explored in this way.

4 The mirror. I suspect this is what I do most of the time these days. I get plenty of love pouring in from others, but having worked through the other stuff I do appear mostly to automatically reflect things back rather than allow them in. Of course you need to keep your own mirror clean to do that.

5 The shield. This is best used in specific moments of attack. For example, if someone is particularly angry with you. It serves no purpose at all to experience the waves of their fury; you cannot respond in any useful way. Imagine you are holding a shield in front of you, its shape and design entirely up to you. See the anger of the other hitting the shield and falling to the floor. This does not make you superior, but it does mean you can respond with care to what lies behind the anger.

I will add here that being half way round the planet is no protection. I mentioned this previously, but it is still worth repeating. In other words it can work online. Be aware. Feelings travel at the speed of light (or thereabouts, may be quicker, never worked out how to measure it).

ESP

Lesson 1

We are beings consistent of Body and Soul and Mind. Maybe also spirit, but I am not too sure of this. Nor is this relevant. The body resides in the physical, while the mind resides in the astral. The astral plane overlaps with the physical, and our mind is the connection that we have to it. This means that we have access to the astral plane, and just as our physical body can manipulate the physical plane to an extent (physical touches physical causes a displacement or transformation in matter) our mind can manipulate the astral plane to a certain extent. The thing about letting the mind affect the physical plane is to allow connections to temporarily exist where there is no mind, and to let the mind become physical, to e.g. move something. Don't worry about this too much, as when we practically do this stuff we don't need to think of that.

The first thing that you need to do before you can discover the abilities within you is: to know. Not to know how to do it, but you have to know that you can do it. This can take

time. It took me two years of lying to myself until I believed my own lies and then after I started truly sensing and affecting the world around me, then I knew. But it takes time, and you can't rush it. To believe is the first step, and then you must know. I can only tell you to suspend logic and let go. These abilities lie within you. All you have to do is find them.

Some people will tell you that to develop your abilities; you have to join or cult or light candles or something. Rubbish. These abilities do not rely on tiny flames to work, all they need is you and you're knowing, and your concentration. Chanting is not useful here either, nor do you have to say spells or burn leaves. If it relaxes you and allows you to concentrate better, which will improve the results of your exercises, then great? But it doesn't work for me =P.

Now why does this thing fit so perfectly into metaphysical reality?

New Age is not what we are doing here, new Age meditation is the thing that if you have been at Jediism the "white light" meditation is: it is about visualizing. What we will study though is the "feeling" of it. The creation of abstract concepts in the state of gnosis and the will to let those concepts affect reality. If you visualize, you day dream, if you day dream, it is metaphysically not real, but only in your mind. There are no pictures on the astral plane, therefore even the fact that it is on your mind does not make it real in the astral plane. The only thing that it affects is your mood.

So much for information to this course. Now let's get down to it.

Ability 1:

Out of Body Experience

get into gnosis. It must be a near perfect state, when you do not remember who you are. Then push out and upwards, and you should float. Now your astral self is in the physical, and leaves the physical body behind. Maybe you're zapped back into your body for the surprise of it. That's normal. I've only hopped out of my body once or twice, and the moment I see my physical body, I become aware of it again, and I am pulled back. So do not worry about the getting back that is the easiest thing of it. Just try to move your body and you will be pulled back. There is nothing more to OBE than this: gnosis, floating out, walking around, and coming back. All you need to do it is the patience to learn gnosis, and a diamond hard will. Do not doubt. If the abstract concept of doubt comes into your mind, then it will be empasted onto your action, it will hinder your ability to do its work...man I can't express myself properly today.

Lesson 2

The first thing to learn: gnosis. The completely still state of mind. Gnosis can also mean other things, like happy state of mind or other, yet we'll call the absence of thoughts or activity in the mind gnosis.

How to do it: meditation. All you have to do is sit down and wait for your mind to clear.

Note: do not think about not thinking, just don't think. If it doesn't work: just sit and wait.

Watch. Observe. But don't do anything to interfere. At the beginning this might take a while to do, yet after a bit of practice you'll laugh at how easy it is to slip into that state of mind. Practice makes perfect.

also: there will be nine lessons, a few interlessons that are obligatory that give you techniques necessary for the next lesson, though they aren't abilities, just skills. Up to lesson 3 it will be tough, but after that you have made it and it will speed up and get really interesting (and kind of fun). Lesson 7 and on are just ideas and tips, as until then you will know all necessary.

Lesson 3

The Next thing: learn to listen to your body. Once you start learning these abilities your body will connect with the astral plane, and the ability intuition will come to you automatically. The barrier between mind and body is now broken. You will then start to sense things, be aware what happens outside your body, feel what others can't feel, see what others can't see, maybe your senses connect with your astral and become as sharp as to taste out chemicals in water (I had this, school bus in eighth grade. It tasted like plastic, just like the bottle. After some purification it tasted better.) You might feel astral things as physical, become empathic and feel other's pain. Note: once you start being empathic, get directly onto shielding.

Chakras are good stuff; learn some more about them, once you become psychic, these astral connections will send you signals. These signals from the astral plane you can learn to interpret to the point that you can develop new abilities such as empathy without having to study it. My favorite chakra is the solar plexus. It is where my empathic abilities came to flourish. The crown chakra, the root chakra and the third eye are also important. The third eye allows you to see ghosts (I've seen a few) the crown chakra is your connection to the heavens, and your root chakra is the one you use to draw energy from the earth.

Lesson 4

In some places you feel welcomed; in an old house you might feel afraid, because it feels dark. This is because of a thing painted onto the astral plane connected to these places. The feeling that you have when you get home after a hard day of work: relief, happiness, can be empainted by you into the astral presence of the objects around you. (yes also objects are present on the astral plane) (I once visited a cathedral in Spain. I went in and, being bored, I decided to feel around the place. I was shocked at how horrible the feeling was. Pain, fear, desperation. It was the most terrible feeling I had ever felt in a place. Maybe it is because people go to that cathedral to confess their sins, because the do not feel well, because they need the comfort of the house of god. Maybe it was because somewhere near there might have been witch or heretic burnings. And the cathedral was very old. I have not been able to find out why.) The same can be with objects.

The astral plane is a plane which does not exist physically. Not what we call physical anyways. It is a plane that is made up of abstract concepts, the same concepts that our mind works in when we think not in words or in pictures. If you think of your mother or father, the feeling of it will probably come to you: a warm feeling, a comforting one, or a negative one. It depends on your relationship with them, and it depends on the person themselves. Each person looks different, smells different (later you might be able to smell out who you are standing next to, it is really fun, I remember well the typical “who is it?” games on the playground, where I could identify the people by their smells...he he.. =P) and every person feels different. We all have different characters and we can on the astral plane (this is for later) look for people and identify them. You do this by feeling what The Jedi in star wars call their Force-signature. Feel like a meeting on the astral plane? Later...when we vibrate and when we send telepathic messages, we use abstract concepts, the feelings of the things we send off. For example: I want to send out to a friend that there is no school...dream....the concept that I would send off would be the unique feeling you have when you run out of school on the last day. The abstract feeling of “holiday”. You can just as well vibrate this at somebody, yet this is a bit trickier. Vibration: when the other person isn’t expecting the message, telepathy: when the other person is expecting it. More to this one later.

Abstract concepts on the astral plane surround us and allow others to identify who you are, what you feel, in what mood you are. These abstract concepts are pure feelings. Feelings are the thing that determines our character, they determine our past and how we feel about it, therefore how we are in the present, and how we will be in the future. Think about it.

Ability 2:

Psychometry or object reading

Hold an object in your hand and get into gnosis. Just observe now how this object makes you feel. Don’t use logic here. If it is a school book it does not necessarily mean you feel the stress in it. It could have been someone’s favorite subject and it may contain joy and excitement...although that is rare I think. Now for the interpretation: it may be that you feel something and you think: what the...is this? It may be an emotion or a concept that you do not know, yet it may be that you simply live it in another form. Imagine you come across something and want to interpret it. Does it feel negative or positive? Have you felt like this before? Does it remind you of something? Of what? With what do you associate that thing? Surely you can figure out what you read. It is not easy, yet if you let that thing, the abstract concept get into you (if it feels negative throw the object out of a window) and I you “go towards it”, if you feel what you are reading, it is quite probable that you can interpret it better

Lesson 5

There are two types of abilities: the ones where you take in, and the ones where you send out. The one is observation, the other is controlling and exercising will on. One is not harder than the other. Once the brother or sister ability, the counterpart of it is mastered, it’s a piece of cake. What I mean with counterpart ability is this: if you get into a state of

mind to use an ability, and you are there, right there ready to do it, but do the opposite (e.g.: instead of giving it happy thoughts you take from it happy thoughts). This ability is very similar to the counterpart power yet in a way it is the opposite. Sending out is not the opposite of sending, the opposite of sending is taking, as the abstract concept in your mind is still there, but you reverse the direction, and although happy feelings do not go your way, they go to the other person.

The next basic thing that you need to be using your abilities is energy. OBEs require practice and concentration, but do not need a lot of energy. Nor does sensing, yet sending out and vibrating does. Before you go on and let these things exhaust you, I'll introduce you to a few power supplies. The one most witches use is the energy from the earth. For my taste thought that takes too long, therefore I use my emotions as a power boost.

To draw energy from the earth, you need to offer before you receive. Sit down and get into gnosis. Feel the energy in your body, and connect yourself to the earth. To do this let the abstract concept of "connecting and returning home" empaste onto your energy, and let this energy flow downwards with the abstract concept of "direction down". The earth will suck it up quickly. Open up, and let the earth draw on your energy. Do not withhold any energy, just let it happen. Then once this is over, the earth will let new energy flow into you. This will be more energy, fresher than the one you had. Send a Thank you downwards and withhold the energy in your self.

To use your emotions: this is what I do. The most incredible power boost is happiness and excitement. I have learned to create those feeling in my solar plexus and then turn this into motivation and pure energy. It is the same procedure as when you get an adrenaline kick and feel fresh and strong even after a long night. To do this: create abstract concept of joy, by doing this you will feel the joy automatically. Then let this feeling overtake you. Once you are full of it, you can set a goal in your mind and then use this energy from your joy to complete this goal. Sometimes when I am down though, I cannot use this joy because my will does not allow my being to suddenly change from sad to happy. I listen to music. Some music has a lot of energy in it. Some tangos, some rock, but also some sad slow songs and some new age. This music you can hear and you feel the energy that the writer and the singer put into the song. This energy you can absorb when you feel it, and if you are at this stage without cheating and skipping any lesson, you can feel this energy out easily. Let it overtake you. Feel the energy in it.

Another method is to use your crown chakra (top of your head) feel for it (you'll know when you have it) and open it up offering to above. Move a bit until you feel a line connecting your chakras, down your spine, then rock slightly creating a flow of energy down your spine. The wider the rocking becomes the more energy will come.

Lesson 6

We have talked about the abstract concepts of objects and of places and of people. These abstract concepts are past or present feelings that are empaste (more to that later) onto these people, places objects, that a psychic can feel out and interpret. The abstract

concepts come from our minds, our presences in the astral plane. The astral plane is a place of abstract concepts. It is a thought-place. A pool of thoughts. If we want to learn to affect things in this pool, we must use the thoughts of the pool itself to change things. Meaning, we use a hand to move an object, we use a thought to feel out somebody. A thought is an abstract concept. You must learn to think in abstract concepts, and avoid visualizing and o imagine stuff. Metaphysically that will change nothing but our body, which may be the intention of a calming meditation, but not of what we are doing here.

Abstract concepts are what we use to send out telepathic messages, to vibrate, to move things, to control electricity, to build shields and to build astral objects and to change your presence on the astral plane. Our greatest tool is our concentration, our will, and our ability to quiet our minds. If you concentration isn't great, I hope your will is strong, because a lot of these exercises require a lot of concentration. I recommend that you practice your concentration will math or with a complicated book or with or with games like chess. Train it. It is your base. If your base is strong: concentration, will and knowing, then your abilities will reveal themselves much quicker than they would if they are not. Your abilities will be stronger and securer.

Lesson 7

There is not much to say here, as you now know how to vibrate (isn't that a strange thing to call it); you can use that skill to learn the next one: sensing, being aware of your environment. This in connection with your intuition will be the alarm in you, that will set off automatically, that will make your heart hammer and your stomach knot every time that there is danger.

Learning to sense is practically impossible, but with a trick I invented, I could teach you.

Ability 4

Out of body awareness

as I can't simply tell you "sense out with that sixth sense you have" we have to use a trick. We will use the abilities you have to create a new one. Sit down. Gather energy. Now send out the abstract concept (this one is a bit harder, but you should be up to it by now) "I invite all I love into me" this should then give you an answer from the planet itself. Send out an invitation until you feel that you are changing. The thing most people think is that suddenly you are able to feel things around you as if they were a part of your body. That is not entirely true: they are a part of your body. You will not really "feel" it as much as you will simply "know" when something happens. Your ESP will snap on, you intuition and your OBA will alert you. After a while, you will not need to send out the invitations any more. Because you will have located your "sense" and it will not be necessary.

Lesson 8

This lesson will be short as well. You know how to feel out, and therefore will also be able to feel into people easily enough. You will find that now, that you have mastered the

basics: it gets interesting! And damn quick.

Ability 5:

Empathy

Do not go on to this ability until you have managed to master sensing out completely, and without invitation.

Sense out, and locate the person you are trying to read. This is similar to object reading, though you don't need to touch the person to sense what is in them. Feel into them and open up a bit, but be ready to break the connection immediately if you feel that something is wrong. This could hurt you.

Lesson 9

Painting with energy is the most universal and interesting ability that we have. It allows us to do anything. You have heard of spells, curses, shields and maybe also of curses upon houses, objects, etc. well, it is possible. I'll tell you right now, that if you are a Jedi or a being sworn to light, you cannot curse. You must hate to curse. This hate is only achieved by few, and the number one rule in psychic matter is the Wiccan oath: do what you want, as long as it doesn't harm anyone. Not yourself, not your cat, not your neighbor, not your dead granny. You might use your new abilities to get a bit more cash if you're short of it, to heal someone, to get girl/boyfriend. That's fine, as long as it does not harm the people around you. Be very careful of what you wish for; be very careful of what you think of. One negative thought in a spell or a painting might ruin a lifetime. You take a huge responsibility when you learn to use the powers within you.

The things you can do with painting with energy are endless. Anything you can imagine, with the properties you want, empainted in anything and anybody you want. I will only teach positive things. Blessings of people, objects and places, shields, objects that you can invent to do certain things for you, and the nicest one of all: causing things to happen.

Ability 6

Painting with energy

this skill is hard to control at the beginning, but once you have made it, it will become easier. You have come this far and have more abilities than 95% of the human population. Congratulations. All you need now is to be a bit stubborn, and not to give up. Draw energy and have clear in mind what to do. As all these different "paintings" have the same pattern, I'll only write it once. In the case of a shield: create abstract concept of protection around you, and create the abstract concept of a time. This time set it as a countdown so that the shield shatters or disperses in a few minutes and you can try again. Once you have this in your mind, feel the energy within you flowing out and creating a bubble around you, or a box. Will the energy to stay put there. Then let go slightly until releasing it completely. You have now a simple shield around you. You can test it for holes by sensing at it or test it for strength by sending little bits of energy at it. As you can now direct energy in any way you want, you can create any psychic object you want with it. The shields you make will though be physical and astral. Create shield with different properties, like reflective or instead of breaking down at psychic attacks drawing the

energy out of them. The only limit is your imagination. Imagine an object that helps you with your work. Psychic objects like a psychic mirror that allows your third eye to see things that other people see. Create it by directing the energy in the way that feels right, all you need to do is feel.

All that there is to a blessing is to empaint the positive things you wish a person into them, into their core. Then feel into the astral plane (you've been doing it all along) and empaint a positive concept into their core. You will feel that now this person radiates a sign on the plane that screams out the blessing. It will attract in this way the positive things. The same thing now with lucky charms: you can make them yourself. Take an apple or a crystal or a hairpin, it doesn't matter what. Empaint the abstract concepts of what you wish it to have and draw to into it. Then this object will be a sign that will tell positive things, the ones you called for, to itself, and to its bearer.

Lesson 10

We are a present in the astral plane and radiate a unique presence there. Anyone who has met us once will be able to (if they are psychic that is) locate you there and do what they want actually. Some irresponsible people think its fun to play sponge and to suck energy out of people. I had that once, not nice. (Doesn't happen too often, don't get paranoid, and with the following you can prevent it)

Ability 7

changing your presence on the astral plane (or changing your force-signature)

your presence in the astral plane can be changed. You can change it to be very backgroundish, or you can conceal yourself in it completely, meaning that you could, whenever someone tries to locate you, when they find you, feel nothing but nothing. This nothingness could a shield which sends back null signals when someone taps it, or that adapts into the environment so well it is invisible. You'd this in the same way you have done: draw energy, abstract concept, empaint. Just feel and trust yourself. If you studied the lessons properly, you have it all and these lessons are just ideas and facts you do not know yet.

Empathy

Empathy is varied and complex in its ways. Yet still so simple that non-empaths can master its ways. Yes, you must always listen to the force to utilize its tools correctly. I urge you to meditate often. Listen to your body, mind and soul. Are you hungry? Tired or upset? What does it feel like within meditation? Or in daily life for that matter. What it feels like in meditation will often be what it feels like out in the world. Remember, empaths FEEL other peoples emotions. Emotions are the same, in many ways, for all. If you encounter a being that does not match what you expect, they are either a master of emotion or they have psychological coverings to their emotions. The issue of psychology is often the case.

I truly believe that from birth empaths are gifted with their abilities. I also believe that a master of the force not gifted as such may acquire empathic ability with applied diligence. For an empath the world is different than for others. You see things differently, feel differently. On occasion they seem to have a different connection to their surroundings compared to other people.

For example as I was pushing myself into exploration I decided to test the waters by going to the forest at night. This forest which has been behind my two homes since I was nine (I am now twenty-four) holds deep and never ending memories, I grew up in this town it all does. I decided after two days of deep meditation (whenever possible) to finally do it. I went to places that I knew well where good and bad things had happened. I held out my hand and explored how my hands felt, my heart and soul, I allowed memories to flood my mind and heart. I could feel it all in places. Memories and emotions rushing in as if I were there again. In others I was guided to the right spot yet had weak feeling if any. It worked, but not like I thought it would. It revealed the weaknesses of the past in me so well I hid from further exploration for weeks. Be careful when seeking the Force, it seeks you as well.

I came out of it a better person, but it is hard. Now in the City Market I can walk aisle 11 and feel the spot where I realized my girlfriend was trying to kill herself ten feet behind me with a box full of sleeping pills. Also though I can revisit good feelings, like Memorial Park which is full of good memories. Hard as it is good or bad, if you come to the point you can revisit old places, and remember old memories and feelings, you must act as though you are watching a video you have seen many times before. Because that is all it really is. The Force says 'Hey I know you, you did this here. remember?' It isn't psychic stuff, it's really just life, if you're empathic it's life x2.

Empaths are commonly, but not always, introverts. I have heard many reasons for this such as above. It is hard to deal with a world full of thought and emotion. I don't like knowing so much about others. I don't want to chance abusing it or using it against someone. So on and so on.

It is honestly scary to suddenly get that jolt of emotion from the person in front of you. It's harder to deal with the truth, "Oh man, I really do creep her out."

It's really tough not to show in your face what you know. But you can use this to advantage in so many ways for both sides. It is important to remember that. Others are hampered by not truly knowing the effect of what they are saying, we do. I urge you to use this for good. You can turn a conversation from going all wrong and turning into a fight. In relationships of any kind this can help you grow as friends, lovers, it can even help you to calm a bad situation with someone you just met. Say if you just hit their car. For evil it is only good for manipulation, I reject such a practice and will not expound upon such.

Walking into a room full of people is tough. The energy is so mixed and condensed that it washes over you. You cannot sort out what is coming from whom, its like trying to drink from a fire hydrant. Often over a bit of time the room can take on a collective feel with the mix still there. Concerts are fun, everyone is united in fun and are happy in their own way. Other thoughts melt away and the darkening of the overall feel is not usually there. High school graduations stink. The collective feel changes quickly, and is often sad. I

wish I could fix that one but we are human after all.

All of these reasons and more are why so many are introverts. It is weird and scary out there. Without knowing how to process what is going on often one opts to stay away. It's like a haunted house, people don't know what really is going on in that mess so they stay away.

So how do you break out of prison and into the world of the Force? The Force is meant to be used for good and happiness for you and others. The gift of empathy was given to you for a reason. Possibly for good, maybe to help you grow with the Force, to change you and make you great. I don't know but I encourage you to embrace it, scary as it is, and find out.

Lesson 1

For some, empathy is a natural trait that takes little effort to "do." For others, the process can be quite unnatural and take time and training. Really, these lectures and exercises are more structured for those who are not "naturals" as I intend to provide step-by-step growth to adepts in the skill.

In an effort to augment your skills at being patient as well as your empathic skills, we begin by people watching. For at least one full week's time, find a public place that has significant pedestrian (people walking) traffic. Sit somewhere and get comfortable. You could sit in a library, a mall, school, the cafeteria at work... wherever you choose to place yourself. it and watch people.

Do not make judgments about the people you observe. Do not imagine what is going on in their lives as you observe. Just sit patiently and take in what you see.

Learn to just take note of people. Jot down any insights you gain from this in a notebook that you can refer back to at a later time. For the purposes of the course, please also share your observations here so we can discuss.

Lesson 2

We are back to working through exercises with this lecture.

Moving into this exercise, the empath trainee continues to return to the same public place to observe people. The exercise itself closely resembles Exercise One in that you will still refrain from judgment and imagination in people watching.

The variation this time is that instead of focusing on people passing you in general, your task is to pick out one person per day amongst those that go by. If you can observe a person who stays in the area for a while, all the better. Again, simply sit and observe.

Lesson 3

Once again, sit in the same public space and settle in to people watch. This exercise becomes more involved now as creativity and imagination are key.

Pick out one person whom you can observe, just as you did before. Again, if the person is remaining in the same area for a while, all the better. Now, your task is to sit and observe and use your imagination. Ask yourself some of the following questions and then provide yourself with the answers, from your imagination.

Why is the person there?

Why is he/she carrying that he/she is carrying?

Why did he choose to wear what he did today?

How is he feeling today?

Now, it will seem strange that you're "making things up" about the person you observe. But go with it! Really! Even though the ideas you come up with may seem extravagant and completely ridiculous, go with it for this exercise. Why? The fascinating bit about the Force and psychic skills in general is how information comes to us. Its that you are just "making things up" about the person, but in truth, you are sensing your subject through the Force when answers come to your questions.

Lesson 4

Once the technique in the previous exercise is second-nature to you, the task before you, empath, is to internalize the question-asking. Instead of focusing on a person with questions as you go through your life, simply focus on them through the Force as you've learned through patient, quiet observation. The need to ask the questions will be gone and you can simply sense the answers, feeling and knowing what the person is feeling.

Lesson 5

This is the final lecture and exercise posted for Empathy. In particular, this may be the most daunting of them all for it leads to one-on-one feedback!

This exercise will require that you work with someone who has either worked through this course, work with me, or work with someone you can study with offline. Any scenario works. The plan is this:

- * Set a specific time for empathic sensing with the other person.
- * At the designated time, reach out as you've studied in the course to sense what that person is feeling, doing, thinking.
- * Record what you sense and seek feedback from your partner.

Empathetic Protection

The following are a range of visualizations you can use to protect yourself from the feelings of others. Whether you believe yourself to be an empath or not they can be quite helpful.

Some of the following are best done before you go out, sitting quietly and visualizing whichever seems most appropriate. While you are using your imagination you may be surprised at how well they can work. Others it is a question of checking in your minds eye during the day, if you start to feel troubled. Some you can do when you get home. There is no formula, just working out what is best for you.

1 The cloak, the light or the egg. If you visualize one of these around you, you can remain empathic, i.e. aware of what others are feeling, but also not be engaged in them. Love and suchlike gets straight through. When I first discovered this and was still in London I used to find that on examining my cloak after I had been amongst a lot of people that it was all tattered and torn, and I had to repair it, but it worked.

2. The coat hooks. Often, as I'm sure you are aware, it can be hard to tell which feelings are yours and which belong to someone else. If you visualize a row of coat hooks, as in a school cloakroom, and look there when you are unsure, if there is anything on those hooks then you are carrying the feelings of someone else. I tend to take the coat from the hook, and gently and lovingly imagine I am returning the coat or whatever to its rightful owner.

3. The sink. Sometimes I have picked up bits and pieces from others throughout the day, nothing large or devastating, just bits of rubbish. These can build unnoticed for some time. These things go in a sink (well you can imagine they do). Check your sink from time to time, and if it has stuff in simply pull the plug out and it all drains away. It doesn't need examining. I really don't think other peoples stuff can be effectively explored in this way.

4 The mirror. I suspect this is what I do most of the time these days. I get plenty of love pouring in from others, but having worked through the other stuff I do appear mostly to automatically reflect things back rather than allow them in. Of course you need to keep your own mirror clean to do that.

5 The shield. This is best used in specific moments of attack. For example, if someone is particularly angry with you. It serves no purpose at all to experience the waves of their fury; you cannot respond in any useful way. Imagine you are holding a shield in front of you, it's shape and design entirely up to you. See the anger of the other hitting the shield and falling to the floor. This does not make you superior, but it does mean you can respond with care to what lies behind the anger.

I will add here that being half way round the planet is no protection. I mentioned this previously, but it is still worth repeating. In other words it can work online. Be aware. Feelings travel at the speed of light (or thereabouts, may be quicker, never worked out how to measure it).

If anyone else has any techniques they use do feel free to add them. Any questions either ask here or find me on IM.

Next up – honesty, with yourself and others, and why it is so important if you are an empath, or around one.

Self Awareness

Lesson 1

Clearly Define Who You Want to Be
from Epictetus' "Manual for Living"

Who exactly do you want to be? What kind of person do you want to be? What are your personal ideals? Whom do you admire? What are their special traits that you would make your own?

It's time to stop being vague. If you wish to be an extraordinary person, if you wish to be wise, then you should explicitly identify the kind of person you aspire to become. If you have a daybook, write down who you're trying to be, so that you can refer to this self-definition. Precisely describe the demeanor you want to adopt so that you may preserve it when you are by yourself or with other people.

Simply, who are you? Consider yourself a square with four quadrants. In each of these quadrants is a different facet of self: emotional, spiritual, physical, mental. Who are you? This is what we will explore in the course.

Describe yourself as an emotional being.
Describe yourself as a spiritual being.
Describe yourself as a physical being.
Describe yourself as a mental being.

What are you pleased about with yourself?
What would you like to change?
In both cases, why?

Lesson 2

Though sometimes it can feel like it, we're not islands that are cut off from the rest of the world by sheer distance. We influence and are influenced by those around us, our experiences, our past and our present.
What do you feel makes you who you are? What has shaped you the most? How so?

Lesson 3

The other courses around here go into *whom* a Jedi is and where we - as an order - have come from. In your own personal journey, what led you to find the Jedi path? What made you take it seriously as something to be after seeing the films or reading a book? What is it about the Jedi path that appeals to you?

Lesson 4

Self Esteem

Before I get to self-esteem, I want to go through the basics of emotions that help you better grasp the concept of healthy self-esteem. I'll also note that this lecture is intended for you to study, and really think on. I won't provide all the answers. A lot of it is common knowledge, and if you pay correct attention, you should have no trouble.

Emotions

Definition of Emotion: Feelings experienced physically and mentally. A reaction to a stimulus.

Development of Emotions

1) Genetic Factors

- Characteristics Inherited from birth

2) Environmental factors

- People and things around you
- Modeling or imitation
- Conditioning
- reinforcement

3) Experiences

- Personal history

Now, we've basically covered a few things on emotions. Now to understand them a little further, and how they place into self-esteem, you will need to understand some basic human emotional needs.

Basic Emotional Needs

1) Love

- A lack of love can cause emotional problems.

2) Self-Esteem

- A lack of self-esteem can cause self-destructive ways.

3) Security - secure and stable people have secure and stable emotions. And likewise, insecurity is reflected in a person's emotions, behavior and level of self-esteem.

From the things listed, I think you can pretty much grasp how this lecture is coming along, and hopefully have a good idea at what I'm getting at. If you don't, emotions are part of our self-esteem, and we need to understand them.

I encourage all of you to take a deep look in yourselves. Examine your reactions to people and situations in your own life. What causes you to do things? Emotions. As a Jedi, we learn to control emotions rather than to allow them to control us. How can we set about doing this?

Well, let's take a look at the stages of emotional response.

Stages of Emotional Response

1) Perception

- See or Sense something.

2) Appraisal

- Identify

3) Emotion

- How you feel about it

4) Physical Changes

- Involuntary, due to the emotion

5) Action

- What you do

Here is a quick example of these steps in a situation.

You're walking down the street, and someone yells your name. You hear, or sense the person that just yelled your name. You then identify who yelled your name. You see it is someone you find attractive. You feel good, because this person actually called to you and you feel emotionally attached, or loved by the person. You then get nervous, excited, or any other type of emotion that you can experience, which changes your own body tone. Your action is to yell back saying, "Hi !" to be polite. You yell that because in past experiences, that is what you've learned to do.

Let's take a deeper look into the various types of emotional responses.

Emotional Responses

1st type – Passive – Takes other point of view without question, even if disagreement.

2nd type – Aggressive – Unwilling to see other point of view and tries to force his/her point or view on another person.

3rd type – Assertive – Able to express feelings in a non-threatening way, willing to see both sides.

Can you see any familiar things with the Jedi yet? Jedi are most often assertive. Not being the bias, but working through the problem. That is also why Jedi are commonly associated with ambassadors and philosophers, because of the 3rd type of emotional response. They're very assertive.

Ok. Now we have looked at one component of self-esteem development: understanding your own personal emotional triggers and responses to stimuli (people and situations).

Here are some aspects of a high self esteem, which you may see in many Jedi:

- 1) Self-confident, secure in who they are and happy with their personal development
 - 2) Not being afraid to take risks
 - 3) Self-controlled
 - 4) Able to give or receive compliments gracefully and confidently
 - 5) Take satisfaction in personal accomplishments, but do not seek to wield this pride to the detriment of others
 - 6) Persistent, not giving up easily
 - 7) Easy to get along with - yet firm when the situation calls for that
 - 8.) Pleasant demeanor (Positive attitude)
 - 9) Makes an effort to achieve - do their best at any cost, or end up learning to do so.
- People with high self-esteem are constantly testing their limits, expanding them, striving for improvement in any area they feel the need.

Here are some characteristics you may see in people with low self-esteem:

- 1) No confidence
- 2) Suicidal, and feelings of worthlessness
- 3) No love for self or others
- 4) Demonstrating a lack of emotional need, which may include being uncomfortable with touching, lack of eye contact, a brash, "tough guy/gal" exterior or an air of overconfidence
- 5) Shyness. It's tough to do anything when you are shy. From meeting people, to taking risks, it can effect any effort you have to achieve a goal, and stay confident in yourself.
- 6) Uncomfortable interacting with people, withdrawn
- 7) No goals (Or giving up on them). This may also include setting impossibly high goals in an attempt to feel better about themselves. However, this backfires because they can't

accomplish anything. This can also be seen in setting ridiculously easy goals which require little or no effort to achieve. They don't provide any challenge, or motivation to them as a person. Goals must be measurable and attainable - and one extreme is as bad as the other.

8.) Drugs (Forgetting experiences). People with low self-esteem may involve themselves with alcohol, or other illegal drugs to forget past experiences they are ashamed or afraid of, and to make themselves feel better for a brief change.

9) Negative Attitude

10) No self-respect

11) Unhappiness

12) Hard to get along with (unpleasant)

13) Afraid to let anyone else into their problems or life - a fear of human contact. This also deals with the issue of lack of trust. Jedi Bright has supplied us with some notes she has on that topic. I'm going to insert her comments here, as they are put quite nicely, and fit right in at the moment.

Trust

Learn to trust your initiative. One might say that this takes self-esteem to do so in the first place and I would agree here. However, did you ever see anyone who did not have ANY self-esteem? I doubt it. Everyone has it, though it is a case of how close to the surface it is. It can often be buried under years of oppression and hatred from other parties, of being distraught at a present situation. By focusing on your ability and not distorting the facts to fit your imprinted description of yourself then you will begin to trust yourself once more. You have found the first layer from which the rest can break through given encouragement.

Another way to get through to this layer is to trust your closest friends. They can help you see the truth and help you to focus on it. You have to take a major step and let them in - this is not a self-esteem matter though it is purely fear and overcoming it. Two very different topics. Friends are not objective, but if they think you are wrong then they do tell you if they are good friends, who truly have your best interests at heart. Listen to them.

Trust the Force. It is something that no one will ever understand in our lifetime, but it will help to guide you. It's the road upon which you have to walk, would you miss the road and risk wandering into the woods? If you learn to trust it, it will show you where you need to go - but you have to have the courage to go down there.

To be at one with yourself also has the added benefit of becoming pure with your goals. You begin not to listen to social pressures. You look introspectively for the answers. This is a lot of what I would call being a Jedi. Knowing yourself, learning yourself, trusting yourself and finally becoming pure in your goals. It will take some time but it can be done with practice and patience.

Now let's look at some ways you can improve your self-esteem.

1) Set goals. Not impossible ones, but challenging goals that are ACHIEVABLE. Not set too high, or too low. And ones that are measurable. An example of a measurable goal would be: "I am going to exercise three times a week for 30 minutes at a time."

2) Create motivational schemes. Look at your interests, and use them to motivate you in your life. This is part of doing things you are comfortable with, and enjoy.

3) Think positive thoughts. This surrounds you with positive energy, and we all know about the ripple effect.

4) Increase participation in activities. Often when you participate in anything, you become involved, and tend to be more open. This is also a good example of what motivation can bring.

5) Be tolerant of yourself and others. Do not cripple yourself with impossible expectations. No one is perfect, and we all have room to grow and develop.

6) Choose the right friends (building trust). As Helen had mentioned, trust your closest friends. Listen to what they have to say, as often they have some of your best interests at heart.

7) Respect others and yourself. If you have problems with other people not respecting you, it sometimes means that you don't respect them, or you are not respecting yourself. Self-mutilation can bring a lot of disrespect from others. So if it is respect you seek, first show respect.

8.) Be kind. Usually when you are kind, the person returns the kindness, which can make you feel pretty good.

9) Resist negative influence. In other words, don't go looking for trouble, and don't walk blindly into it. If your friends say "Let's go burn a building", you of course should weigh the risks of that behavior. Are the consequences worth the brief moment of "popularity" and "acceptance"? True friends like and accept you for who you are, not what you do.

10) Inventory your strengths and your weaknesses. This can help you identify your problems, and change yourself, helping you to achieve what you want to, by improving yourself.

11) Select supportive and encouraging friends. This also ties into what Helen was saying. Don't choose friends who you know will not care about you, nor take you into negative

influence.

12) Learn something positive when you experience defeat. You can learn from just about any defeat. This also can tie into with inventorying strengths and weaknesses. See what you did wrong, and improve on it.

13) Practice good health habits. A healthy body leads to a healthy mind. Keep both happy.

14) Do something you enjoy. You can obviously see how this can raise self-esteem.

15) Develop a sense of humor. Learn to laugh at yourself, and not take things so personally. You shouldn't get upset over small things. Learn to laugh it off to ease some tension. As Walt Kelly, creator of the Pogo comic strip, said many years ago, "Don't take life so seriously, it isn't permanent."

16) Help others and give compliments. Goes nice with Jedi doesn't it? Don't give bogus comments, it will only make you feel guilty. Unless you're one of those people who get off on

it, like a joke. That is called a white lie, which can have its effects, so tell the truth, and be honest with yourself.

17) Reward yourself when you do something well. This is not in relation to a bribe, but rather serves as a motivation to repeat the behavior in the future. This reward could be anything. Maybe you enjoy reading or just sitting around after work. After a good or hard day, it's good to do something you enjoy to relax and ease any stress you have.

As you can see, good self-esteem is something that everyone needs, and can develop with a little effort. It is one of the key building blocks in becoming a Jedi.

Lesson 5

As the previous lecture on Self-Esteem described, setting realistic goals for your life is a "good thing." A friend of mine once suggested that students of life should set several goal sheets. She thought you should have a list for where you want to be in a year, 5 years from now and 10 years from now. If you feel you can be so structured, go for it! (But remember to remain flexible!).

Myself, I stick to a 1-year plan. Each January, I write down several things that I'd like to accomplish in the upcoming year. These can range from wanting to work on weight loss, to volunteering more, and beyond.

What sorts of goals do you have in mind for yourself? Create a list here and save it for yourself.

Lesson 6

Consider this scheme of power:

1) Thoughts - the beginning. Thinking about a topic is minimally powerful. It begins but does not act on its own.

2) Writing - the second level. In writing down the thought or insight, power begins to take shape.

3) Speaking - the most powerful. Giving an idea spoken (verbal) words manifests.

Now, think about what you say to yourself in your quiet moments. Are your thoughts, writings or words filled with "I can do this... I am doing this..." or "I'm so bad at... I'll never get the hang of..."? What do you say to yourself?

Self-improvement speaker, Dr. Wayne Dyer Ph.D. (see him on PBS) has a quote he recites to his audience: "As you think, so shall you be." An interesting set of words. As you think, so shall you be.

With these ideas laid out on the virtual table, take a moment to ponder the positive and negative things you think, write or say about yourself on a day-to-day basis. On which end of the scale do you tip? Positive or negative? In either direction, you reinforce ideas within yourself.

So, the natural question to ask is - do you want to reinforce positives or negatives in yourself?

Lesson 7

First:

Something "sort of" easy that you can do here just to gauge your own self-perception.

- * List 5 positive things about yourself.
- * List 5 things that you would like to change about yourself.

Second:

We all have a self-perception of who we are. We've discussed this all along through the lectures and exercises. Now, consider who this "inner self" is - how you perceive who you are - against how others perceive you. Where are there differences, that you know of? Why? How?

Feeling the Force

The Following Lecture is courtesy of Ellen Merritt. You will notice that many of the sensations described in this lecture as feeling the Force also have a marked reflection on the meditation lecture, showing the energy of the Force in movement. And now, the Lecture:

Many students I talk to, including my own Padawan, are understandably excited when they first feel the Force within them. And it is very common for a Jedi student to feel the Force first in his or her upper body, i.e. arms, hands, head, face, neck, etc. Many students experiencing this phenomenon wonder why it is that they should feel the Force there, as opposed to all over. The answer lies, as my Master taught me, in the Hindu chakra system, or the systems of upper and lower energies in the body.

It is quite common for a Jedi's upper, or higher, energy centers (those of love, insight, compassion, self-confidence, etc.) to be stronger than the lower ones (those of baser emotions such as anger, fear, greed, lust, etc.), as Jedi tend to transcend these lower emotions. However, although we Jedi no longer act through those emotions, we must realize that they still exist, and serve as an anchor for our higher energy centers.

Hence, attaining a balance between these two energy centers is paramount to a Jedi feeling the Force flow fully through his or her body. To do this, I have found that the most effective method is to enter a light to middling state of meditation, placing the palms of the hands on the thighs, and focusing Force energy through the palms into the thighs. This energy will feed the lower energy centers, and bring the entire body into balance. Once this method is implemented, it will not be long before a Jedi will begin feel the Force flowing fully and freely.

In addition, balance is necessary from a psychological standpoint as well as physical. In order to help others, we Jedi must stay in touch with our baser emotions, in order to be able to relate to another's pain, hatred, and so forth. It does not help to counsel or otherwise intervene with a person who knows that you have no idea where he or she is coming from. A person in pain of any sort has a rare gift for spotting pretense, however deeply buried it might be. A Jedi who completely abandons his or her lower emotions in essence ceases to be human, because he or she will no longer be able to relate to humanity in its natural state.

I would be happy to answer any further questions on this topic as I am able, or to refer you to another of my colleagues who would be able to help. May the Force be with you.

Feeling the Force Like a Fish

When we train in the Force, we are working towards a change in our element. The force, for all intents and purposes, is much like water. As humans, we are constantly surrounded by water... the water in the ocean, the water in the ground beneath our feet, and the moisture in the air. And yet, when we think of "being in the water", we think only of being in a swimming pool or some other form of water, the sort of which we generally picture when we think of water.

This is much the same as we view the Force. The force surrounds us and flows through us... and yet we generally notice the Force when we are making a direct effort to study and understand it. The majority of people are like plants in water... they are in the water, and of the water, but have little knowledge about how to move through the water, or use

the water to best advantage. Then, many users of the Force are like an Olympic swimmer... they have mastered the ability to use the water to best advantage, but are not truly cognizant of their connection to it, and it is not their natural element anymore, because the focus is not in BEING with the Force, but simply using it... just as a swimmer must come up for air, the water is not the swimmers natural element. The most powerful of the Jedi are those that take the characteristics of both the plant and the swimmer... they are able to be immersed in the Force fully, and are content with just being in and of the Force. By this, they show that they are like the plant in water. And yet, the most powerful Jedi also take on the part of the swimmer, being able to move through the Force and use its power. By doing this, the Jedi achieves both characteristics, of the plant and the swimmer, and becomes a fish in water... native in its element, and completely at one with its surroundings. It is the like the fish that a Jedi must strive to be... because if a Jedi becomes to the Force like a fish is to water, then the Jedi has accomplished a very great feat.

So how do we attain this oneness with the Force? Meditation has a large part of it... by learning to listen to the Force when meditating, you begin to hear a bit more of yourself. By hearing yourself, you begin to understand more of your place in the grand scheme of things. The next step is to be able to feel the Force when you are not meditating... the aim is to get to the point where you feel the Force simply by existing... this is how it should be, because the Force flows through you constantly. With each breath, you should feel the ebb and flow of the Force, and be able to feel it shift around you as you move, and be able to feel it within your surroundings. It is by this that a Jedi gains true awareness of his or her surroundings, and becomes aware of their true place in the universe. Thus, by feeling the Force around us, we are like the Fish who is able to feel the presence of a predator by the ebb and flow of the water, or the presence of food on the surface of the water, by the ripples it sends out. This is the goal of a Jedi... awareness through existence, and to be able to feel the force in all actions.

Meditation

A Comprehensive Look At Meditation

The practice of meditation, which used to be considered an oriental custom, has become widespread in recent years.

What is Meditation? Why is it a Science?

Webster's dictionary defines the term "to meditate" as "to engage in contemplation or reflection". This is an accurate description of one effective form modern meditation can take. It goes beyond the mystical method of seeking the ecstasy of union with the divine, or with God, for its own sake. It transcends the goal of many modern types of meditation which emphasize "peace of mind" by detaching the mind from all its normal functions, often inducing a sense of mental paralysis rather than peace. The mind is thus incapable of registration, interpretation and application.

These three words probably supply the most accurate definition of creative meditation - registration, interpretation, application. They imply mental activity, involving cause and effect, contact with a source of inspiration, and the consequent ability to use and apply the fruits of meditation.

There is a way, which can be learned and practiced, by which the consciousness can be focused, aligned and turned towards the first source of spiritual inspiration - the soul. This starts with mental activity; not only that of the lower mind, the analyzing, directing faculty, but also the ability to bring the lower mind, through conscious direction, into alignment with the higher mind and soul. A thought or "seed idea" contemplated in the light of the soul produces new thoughts, mental illumination, which the lower mind interprets and applies.

Because meditation is concerned with mental receptivity, it is essentially a means of channeling energy. Scientists today tend to agree that "all is energy" - a basic occult aphorism. The life force that holds all manifestation in being is energy; consciousness is response to the energy infusing human hearts and minds. Clearly directed thought in meditation, with the mind held steady in the light of the soul, is a scientific means of contacting those major aspects of the life force we call light and love and power, giving them right interpretation, and directing them, in the form of ideas and planning, into specific activity.

Meditation is a scientific technique which can be relied upon to produce results if followed through with care and precision. While the techniques of meditation can be learned, the way the techniques are applied varies for each one. Each of us must find the way for ourselves, for it is in experimentation that we gain experience in the right use of the mind, bring the consciousness into alignment with soul energy, and learn how to give right expression in service to the abundant spiritual resources available in meditation.

Prayer and Meditation

Prayer and meditation are two distinct methods of approach to reality. Both are equally legitimate and useful. Prayer is based on the concept of God Transcendent, above and beyond the world of human affairs; meditation, however, appeals to those who recognize God Immanent, or within His creation. When we pray we speak to God; when we meditate we listen to God, or let God speak to us.

The basic distinctions between prayer and meditation are motivation and means. Prayer is based on personal desire and depends upon emotional fervor and intensity for results; whereas meditation is, or should be, motivated by service to the Plan and the greater good for all humanity. Meditation uses the disciplined mind to contact the soul and know the will of God.

Both prayer and meditation are invocative in nature. They both call upon spiritual forces for the release of energies in answer to a voiced demand, and both methods work. Both methods are needed because much of humanity is still focused at the emotional level. Meditation is practiced by those who recognize that divinity - the "Kingdom of God" - is within, and that God-realization is a natural process. The disciplined use of the mind, combined with service to others, is the means for attaining that realization. "Christ in you, the hope of glory", is a reality to the mediator.

Redefining Spiritual Living

The idea of spiritual development has been associated almost exclusively with the religions of the world. To be doing "spiritual" work meant becoming a priest, a rabbi or a

minister; or it meant joining a religious order of one kind or another. The church rather than the human soul became the custodian of the spiritual life. Today individuals are the custodians of their own spiritual lives and are in the process of spiritualizing their own material lives.

While the religious person postulates that God is everywhere, the scientist has discovered that energy is everywhere. The main problem stemming from this relatively modern cleavage between spirit and matter concerns the human condition itself. When spirituality is left unrelated to ordinary daily life, the lower, material values tend to sway; whereas for better world conditions, human well-being and right human relationships, spiritual energies must condition material values and material living.

The word "spiritual" relates to attitudes, to relationships, to the moving forward from one level of consciousness to the next. It is related to the power to see a new vision and new and better possibilities. It refers to every effect of the evolutionary process as it drives the individual forward from one range of sensitivity to another; it relates to expansions of consciousness, to all activity which leads toward to some form of further development.

The discoveries of science, or the production of some great work in literature or in the field of art, are just as much an evidence of spiritual unfoldment as the experiences of the mystic or the registration by the disciple of a contact with his or her own soul.

Recognizing one's own spiritual nature allows the individual to recognize divinity in others and in all forms of life. Learning to think of each other as souls, we begin to act accordingly. As we each take our own next step forward into a more inclusive and compassionate understanding, we help to lift the human family nearer to its spiritual destiny - the establishing of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Meditation: a Spiritual Discipline

Since the word "spiritual" applies virtually to the whole of life, it describes anything that leads to greater vision, understanding, and integration with the various forms life takes.

Spirituality involves an ever-widening sphere of influence and responsibility.

The key word in spiritual development is discipline. A life that is self-disciplined mentally, emotionally and physically, can be depended upon by the soul. The initial occasional contacts between soul and personality, fostered by meditation, can be increased both in duration and intensity as the disciplined personality offers a ready channel for the soul to use. The careful, non-fanatical discipline of the self-centered personality vehicles - or states of awareness - establishes a working relationship between the personality and the soul, bringing the personality life into alignment with soul intention.

The discipline of daily meditation as a means of contacting the soul and of developing soul consciousness and soul fusion is a major means of spiritualizing life on this planet and helping to externalize the Kingdom of God.

The Four Components of the Personality

The science of meditation involves the fact that a human being is essentially a spiritual entity occupying a personality form. The personality itself is composed of four vehicles, or bodies: the mental, emotional, etheric and dense physical. Meditation is concerned

with the right use and controls of these personality vehicles, their integration into a unified coordinated whole and finally, the fusion of the integrated personality with the soul.

Each of the personality vehicles is the agent of a particular type of energy and experience, providing both a mechanism of perception and a means of expression. The mind, or mental body, distinguishes the true from the false, evaluates facts and weighs the opinions and ideas of others. The mind plans and decides; it is essentially a creative mechanism. The emotional body is that component of the personality which perceives and expresses feelings - love, hate, desire, longing, anger, or the scores of other emotions. The etheric body is the energy body, which interpenetrates dense physical matter and conditions it by the type and quality of energy flowing through the etheric channels. The etheric is the medium of contact and response with the ocean of energies in which we live. The dense physical vehicle functions largely as an automaton, responding to the thoughts and feelings which flow, as energies, through the etheric body, motivating physical activities.

Work in meditation is required to harmonize the thinking and feeling faculties, to coordinate and integrate the mental and emotional bodies into a coherent whole, evoking the flow of energy from the soul. With the mental, the emotional and physical bodies under the guidance of spiritual purpose, inner conflicts are resolved and the integrated personality becomes a pure vehicle of soul expression, a means of releasing greater light and love into the world of human affairs.

The Nature of the Soul

The soul is the seat of consciousness and quality, the true server, the disciple. The term "discipleship" defines the effort to live a life of service with its inevitable expansions of consciousness.

The soul is the intelligent will-to-good of the principle of love, the centre of spiritual force through which the plans of God come into being. Every form of any kind, be it an atom, a human being, or a planet, has - or is - a soul. The soul, or consciousness principle, while identical in nature in all human beings, varies in degree of development and unfoldment.

The student of meditation requires an effective source of teachings in which he has confidence and which can be tested and self-applied. Each expansion of consciousness, always initiated by the individual, fits him or her to express soul awareness more clearly and accurately. There is a "chain" of hierarchy, or soul life, linking together all who are capable in some degree of expressing the qualities and principles of our evolving planetary life. All are interrelated and interdependent, from the unit to the whole, and the achievement of any individual profoundly affects the whole.

The human soul includes, but is not limited by, the personality through which life is expressed. Through meditation and contemplation, and through the sustained intent of the disciple, the soul illumines the mind and inspires the heart, which in turn transmits understanding and wisdom to the brain. The psyche or soul, the perceiver or thinker, is the immortal, imperishable spark of divinity, the Son of God, the spiritual intelligence which is the real human being.

Meditation: the Bridge Between Soul and Personality

The recognition of duality in human nature produces, eventually, the intention to bridge the gap between the personality and soul, for the soul ever seeks conscious union with its personality expression. While aspiration may provide the motive, the real work of bridge building is carried out on the mental level, based on the ability to control the mind through the discipline of regular meditation.

Meditation establishes relationship between soul and personality. It is cooperative relationship, leading ultimately to soul-personality fusion. The work is based on the simple premise that energy follows and conforms itself to thought. Correct use of the power of the mind will achieve any purpose, good or not so good. Occult meditation involves a focused mind, the capacity to visualize, an ability to build thought forms and to use the creative imagination, plus an accurate grasp of the soul's intent.

This type of meditation enhances the quality of life. It creates a lighted way of relationship and communication between the subjective realm of the soul and its objective expression, the personality. As the personality adapts and surrenders to the dominance of the soul as the real Self, it is in turn redeemed by soul light and energy and all aspects of life on the physical plane are irradiated and uplifted.

The Value of Alignment

Meditation is, or should be, a deeply spiritual experience. It leads to right relationship with God and to right human relationships in every day life. It is essentially the means par excellence of establishing alignment between the various aspects of planetary life which, from the angle of consciousness and of form, appear to be separate.

Creative meditation begins with an alignment exercise and results in a deeper, more extensive and more sustained alignment between the meditator and his or her whole environment. Alignment brings the various levels and states of consciousness "into line" with one another, or into correct relative adjustment.

In meditation alignment concerns the mental body - the mind; the emotional/feeling nature - the heart; the etheric or energy body and the physical self. When these are integrated into a unity, they can be aligned with the soul itself, the spiritual Self. A channel of communication is thereby created linking the brain, the heart, the mind and the soul; the life energy of the soul, with its power to illumine and inspire, can then sweep through into activity, affecting every aspect of daily life.

In this process, the mind is the active principle. The mind visions, visualizes, concentrates the needed energy, and focuses the required attitude. Without necessarily being conscious of results, the mind can triumphantly act as if the necessary alignment has been created. Constant repetition and focused attention provide the building blocks. Once created in consciousness, the essential alignment is ever present, needing only a moment of directed thought to bring it to life as an active ingredient in the relationship between the inner and outer life.

Meditation: a Way of Life

Meditation offers an alternative to the purely materialistic values of modern life. It is a means of harmonizing or resolving the apparent conflict between the spiritual and material aspects of living. Meditation is not an escape from reality, but a path of discovery of the true Self, the spiritual being, the soul.

The basic objective of meditation is to enable an individual to become in outer manifestation what he or she is in inner reality. Meditation leads along the path of becoming, towards the spiritual ability to be, to know, and to do. Meditation, therefore, involves the whole life expression, subjective and objective. It concerns the use of the mind by the soul to initiate action in line with the plan for humanity. Within this Plan-centered process, the meditating unit is stimulated, enlightened and given right opportunity to contribute to planetary evolution the individual richness each one contains in potential. True occult meditation is practiced as a service to the human race. Today the soul of humanity is in process of taking control of the personality way of life. The long process leading towards the soul-infusion of the race has been initiated. The practice of meditation can now serve to speed and implement the process within the planet as a whole; for while, in the past, cooperation with the planetary meditative rhythm has been the service of a pioneering few, today it can become a way of life for many.

Creative Meditation: a Planetary Service

The technique of meditation governs all expansions of consciousness, including the entire process of evolutionary development within the planet. It is the technique of spiritual contact and apprehension, the means of furthering the evolution of human intelligence, the capacity to love, and the ability to bring the personal will into alignment with the divine will.

Meditation is the single most effective means for transcending the binding, restrictive sense of separateness and isolation which imprison the human consciousness and render it futile. Meditation is the outstanding creative agent upon the planet. The effect of human meditation at this time is to change conditions, to invoke the higher spiritual potencies, to work with concentration - both vertically and horizontally - within the world of humanity and within the kingdom of God. This vertical and horizontal activity holds the secret of creative meditation.

The intention to be of service to humanity is the essential motivation for all true creative meditation. Expansion of the human mind is based on the ability to love and to serve one's fellow human beings. The ultimate result in the consciousness of the individual is illumination, wisdom and the will-to-good, and an expanding ability to cooperate in the creative and redemptive purposes of our planetary life. Meditation as a planetary service is both practical and effective.

Dangers and Safeguards of Meditation

The way of meditation is much like any other journey, in that one follows a path to reach a goal. And, as with any path, there are certain pitfalls that may face the traveler. Meditation is not harmful in itself, but if misused or practiced unwisely, it can create personal problems for the meditator.

The major safeguard in any course of meditation is simple commonsense, and a balanced attitude. Commonsense offsets over-zealousness, fanaticism or a rigid one-pointed ness, which can lead to mental or physical strain. With a sense of balance, one realizes that progress in consciousness is a long term affair, and that changes do not occur overnight.

This avoids the disappointment felt by the neophyte when great revelations do not come as promptly as desired.

One of the major pitfalls of meditation is also one of the best known: the case of individuals who become so lost in their own subjective world that they tend to withdraw from physical reality. Meditation should lead to a well-rounded life expression. Too much mental strain or over-stimulation can be corrected by expressing mental experiences as physical facts. This might be done by attempting to translate one's highest visions or ideas into some project or activity which will benefit others.

A second possible danger of meditation lies in emotional over-stimulation. Meditation brings an increased flow of energy into the meditator's life, which tends to accentuate both positive and negative qualities, and to bring them to the surface where they can be clearly seen. Each meditator is responsible for handling this greater energy flow. One has to discover one's own emotional weaknesses and endeavor to maintain a balancing focus of attention on the mental plane.

The student of meditation should proceed slowly and cautiously. Anything worthwhile requires time and effort. The results that occur from a slow building process are more likely to endure than the results of work done hastily in hope of instant success. The student should also aim at regularity in meditation. Twenty minutes' work daily is worth more and is safer than four hours of work once a month.

The most reliable safeguard is to be found in a life of service. Meditation brings in energy and inspiration. If this is not expressed through some form of service, it can result in congestion or over-stimulation. Service is the right use of soul energy, vision and inspiration.

Group Meditation

Although meditation may begin as a solitary activity, like any other field of interest sooner or later one becomes part of a greater whole from which one derives a sense of meaning and purpose. Through meditation, one emerges into a state of consciousness shared by others, a state as real a physical existence, although characterized by different types of perception. The meditator finds a community in consciousness, engaging in group meditation.

This does not mean that individuals must work together in the same place or even at the same time. The true meeting place of the group is the plane of mind, or the mental plane. In metaphysical terms, meditation takes place outside time and space, but what is important in group meditation is the sense of a common focus and interest, of group attention on the object of meditation. The individuals who comprise a group are united by a shared idea and interest, and not so much by a personal rapport. Groups may work together and meditate on many different subjects, but the underlying theme in group work is service to humanity. In this way the group plays its part within the planetary life.

Groups may work to bring about a greater light in human affairs and to condition the subjective atmosphere of the planet. They work with such energies as light, love and the will-to-good, helping to relate these subjective energies to daily, physical life. Although these groups may be working to enlighten the human environment, they do not use force. They do not, for instance, attempt to direct energy at the mind of some individual or group in an attempt to change or influence them. But they make light available, or create

a subjective condition whereby an individual or a nation can more easily stand in the light of its own soul.

Participation in group meditation work often has side effects on the individuals involved. As one works in group meditation, one gradually gains a greater insight into one's own affairs, into world affairs, and into the nature of group interplay. Meditators develop a sense of integration with their co-workers, as well as a sense of identity and oneness with all those who serve humanity. In the process, participants gain a priceless knowledge: they learn from their own experience that there is a force for good in the world, that there is a Plan for human evolution, and that what they do in their own lives and contribute in service does make a difference.

The New Group of World Servers: **A Meditating and Mediating Group**

There is a gigantic group meditation going on in differing phases upon our planet. All the meditating units and reflective groups are related to each other through their unified spiritual purpose. That purpose is service of the Plan for the furthering of human evolution. In this meditation, two major planetary centers, or groups, are working in concert with the human kingdom: one is the spiritual Hierarchy of the planet and the other is the new group of world servers. The spiritual Hierarchy is known by many names; to the Christians it is known as "the Kingdom of Heaven and of God"; in the East as the "Society of Illumined Minds". It is comprised of those sons of God who have traveled further along the path of evolution than the rest of humanity, who have transcended the limitations of the strictly human state of consciousness, yet who continue to serve humanity and the Plan.

Today a growing number of men and women are becoming sensitive to the Plan and the working for its unfoldment. They are all part of a subjectively unified group known as the new group of world servers. This group represents an evolutionary success. For the first time in human history, substantial numbers of men and women are recognizing the role of the human kingdom in the continuity of life and consciousness on this planet.

Humanity stands as a bridging kingdom between the Kingdom of God and the lower kingdoms - animal, vegetable and mineral - and as such fulfills the task of divine mediator. The new group of world servers mediates between the Hierarchy and humanity, maintaining a vibrant and radiant channel through which inspiration can flow. Members of the new group of world servers consciously accept this responsibility for planetary redemption.

Members of the new group of world servers may or may not be aware of the group as a whole or their place within it. They are linked together by their love of humanity and by their constant endeavor to enhance the human condition, "thinking through" the ideas and principles to be given world-wide application. Through the creative use of the mind, or meditation, these men and women are able to penetrate into the realm of the soul and bring forth that divine energy for human use. They perceive and adapt the Plan for humanity and aid, by their meditative thought, in producing practical ideas that will serve the whole human race.

At the heart of this serving group stand those individuals who use the technique of occult meditation to align themselves consciously with the Hierarchy and thereby reveal the

Plan to a needy world. All men and women of goodwill can take part in this great spiritual transition. No matter where an individual may be, he or she can assist in some way to create a better future and by so doing, can become a part of the new group of world servers.

Meditation at the Full Moon

Meditation at the time of the full moon is one important form of service. The full moon each month is a time of intensified energy and of heightened spiritual activity; a time of inspiration, of vision and insight, and of increased opportunity to serve. Meditation at the time of the full moon is a technique for effective contact with the light and love needed today in human affairs. At the time of the full moon festivals, the moon stands on the far side of the earth, away from the sun. This leaves a full, direct and unimpeded relationship between the earth and the sun, the source of our life, energy and consciousness, symbolic of the relationship between the human personality and the soul. The time of the full moon is the high tide of spiritual energies both in the planet and in the world of human thinking. Those who choose to serve this way undertake the mental work of redemption and renewal, transforming and illuminating the inner atmosphere of human consciousness. A subjective alignment with the planetary group of meditator's is necessary, in order both to carry forward scientific work of the scope, and to protect the individual from possible over-stimulation. The participation of people in many nations increases the effectiveness of this service work through meditation; the group is greater than the sum of its parts. The pouring in of spiritual energy at the time of the full moon is augmented by the focused thought of co-operating meditator's. This has several effects; it strengthens the subjective relationship among all members of the human kingdom; it also influences the relationship between humanity and all other kingdoms co-existing on this planet. Right human relationships are an indication of right relations between people, and between humanity and God; this, in turn, clears the way for the emergence of a higher quality of life.

Each month during the full moon the sun is aligned with one of the twelve zodiacal signs. The signs indicate the quality of the subjective energies available for transmission during that month. In the annual cycle's humanity as a whole is exposed to the full range of experience. These energies and qualities stimulate the evolution of human consciousness; all zodiacal energies can be used by all individuals.

Conscious work with these various types of spiritual energy brings inspiration and ideas into the reach of human minds and hearts. Meditation, especially in subjective group formation, stimulates a new factor in human awareness - a growing spiritual maturity. This vast, planetary work of world service contributes to the task of spiritually civilizing planet Earth.

The Sixfold Progression of Divine Love

The science of meditation is based on work with subjective energies. The skilled meditator is able to cooperate in meditation with others in distributing such energies where they are most needed through the power of thought. The primary energy

underlying all life on this planet is the energy of love radiating from God, or the One in Whom we live and move and have our being.

Just as the human heartbeat sets the rhythm by which blood circulates through the body, the energy of love flows through life with its own rate and rhythm. In the case of our planet earth, the ebb and flow of love from the heart of the sun is indicated by the cycles of the moon. The time of the full moon is the high tide of the planetary flow simply because the moon is out of the way; it is directly opposite the sun. During the period of the full moon everyone can participate more fully in the flow of divine love while the energy flow is at its peak. Each full moon makes it possible to become a conscious part of a great planetary process - the sweeping tide of energy known as the sixfold progression of divine love.

This progression begins symbolically in the planetary head centre (Shamballa), the centre of planetary purpose and will, the centre where the will-to-good originates. This will-to-good is transmitted as essential love. From the planetary head centre the stream of love moves to the planetary heart, the spiritual Hierarchy. The Hierarchy is the Kingdom of Souls, the fifth kingdom in nature or the Kingdom of God. It is comprised of those who have passed beyond the strictly human stage of evolution to what might be considered the superhuman stage. The Hierarchy is the repository of planetary love and wisdom and formulates the Plan of light and love which implements God's Purpose and draws humanity forward.

As the flow of love reaches the Hierarchy it is focused into a single point - the heart of love within the Hierarchy, the Christ. This is the living Christ, "the teacher of angels and men", the eldest within that great family of brothers, humanity. The Christ, standing as the head of the spiritual Hierarchy, is the same great Teacher who is known by many different names in the major world religions.

From the Christ, the stream of divine love flows into the new group of world servers, a group of subjectively linked individuals working in their own place and way to embody the light and love needed in the world today. This group of servers transmits the flow of light and loves into the hearts of men and women of goodwill everywhere - those who are responsive to love and to the idea of right human relations.

The flow of love finally emerges into physical expression by means of various focal points through which the Christ can work. A focal point might be, for example, a major planetary centre such as New York, London or Geneva, or a significant world organization such as the United Nations.

This is the sixfold progression of divine love underlying all meditation. From the centre where the will of God is known, through the spiritual Hierarchy of the planet, through the point at the heart of the Hierarchy, the Christ, from the Christ through the new group of world servers who, in their turn, direct it towards the men and women of goodwill all over the world, and then into human activities on the outer physical plane of life.

Everyone is a part of this living process. Anyone can become a conscious participant in this flow of love, in this subjective planetary reality which underlies the outer world of affairs.

Occult Meditation: A Sample

There are essentially two types of meditation - mystical and occult. And both of these differentiate into various meditation techniques.

Mystical forms of meditation depend largely upon an active feeling nature and an intense desire for spiritual union; or for some personal spiritual experience. This type of meditation tends to be introspective and self-centered.

Occult meditation, on the other hand, builds upon whatever mystical experience may have occurred, taking the whole idea of meditation a step further. The goal is no longer personal illumination and inspiration, but the right use of the meditative technique to serve in the upliftment and the transformation of the human kingdom and the world in which we live. Occult meditation is a method of cooperating with the process of planetary evolution and planetary redemption.

Today, when so much nonsense and inaccuracies are attributed to the term "occult", it is useful to bear in mind one simple definition. Occultism is the science of energy flow and energy relationships. Occult meditation is a means of consciously and purposefully directing energy from a recognized source to the creation of some specific effect.

It is, of course, quite possible to meditate for selfish, personal goals; to acquire a facility in contacting sources of powerful energies and to utilize those energies for one's own ends, material or subtle. Energy per se is impersonal. It can be used for good or evil ends. The motivation of each individual is the determining factor. And if we seek in meditation to channel the energies of light and love and the will-to-good, these carry their own safeguards from misuse.

The most powerful energy available to us at the present time is that of love. The very nature of love is selfless and harmless. If the inherent qualities of the energies we receive in meditation are not also a part of the quality of the meditator, those energies cannot be safely and effectively transmitted. There's a blockage, a hindrance, in the channel of energy transmission which prevents or deflects the flow of energy and aborts its true usefulness. Effective occult meditation depends on the quality, the motive, the state of consciousness, the spiritual status and the defined purpose of the meditator.

Occult meditation is a mental activity, requiring a condition of alignment, or at-one-ment, between the three aspects of the mind: the lower or concrete mind, the soul, and the higher or abstract mind. This alignment integrates all three aspects of the individual meditator - spirit, soul and body - making available to him/her the spiritual resources of life, consciousness and form.

By way of this alignment the meditator is also united with the life principle in all things within the planet, and with the soul or consciousness of all manifestation. Thus, alignment is dual; vertical and horizontal. And this creates the basic form of all truly spiritual occult meditation. Today, the most effective type of occult meditation is called Raja Yoga, the "kingly science of the soul". Yoga is a disciplined way of achieving union or alignment, and a measure of control on some plane of consciousness. Raja Yoga uses the creative imagination, the art of visualization and the use of a seed thought to exercise and expand the mind into the world of meaning and significance. It is in becoming aware of life's meaning and significance that we train ourselves to function fully as souls in incarnation.

Raja Yoga is for the spiritually awakened individual intent on the right application of all available energy and resources. A typical form of Raja Yoga method of occult meditation might run something like this:

First, find a time and a place where the work can be done without interruption or distraction. Early in the morning is the best time, before the mind becomes preoccupied with the mundane affairs of the day. And daily regularity is important.

Sit in a straight-backed chair with the spine erect, yet with the body comfortable and relaxed. Fold the hands lightly in the lap and cross the ankles. Take a few slow, deep breaths while you empty out of the consciousness any personal matter that tends to cause anxiety or distract attention.

Lift the consciousness, through the creative imagination, to a focal point outside and above the top of the head. See this as the lower mind, the analytical, critical mind, stilled and quiescent, a quiet pool of light. Project a line of light upwards to the soul centre, seeing the soul as a brilliant sun, a radiant source of energy. This is the real spiritual self. Visualize a further projection of the line of light towards the higher or abstract mind, the lowest aspect of the divine Self. Hold that lighted alignment in the imagination and by visualization. This should only take a few minutes.

Pause for a moment of interlude, aware of the light and energy of the soul as the central point in consciousness. Then, holding the mind steady in the light, meditate for a few minutes on a seed thought, for example, "Let the soul control the outer form and life and all events. Let love prevail. Let all men love".

Examine the words first with the analytical mind, and then seek to penetrate to the real inner meaning. What would it mean if the soul were in control of all life on earth, and if love were the energy relating all human beings?

Then visualize the flow and precipitation of energy throughout the planet from the highest point of divine life to its lowest point of physical manifestation.

Pause for a few moments of reflection on the ways and means of working out the energies of light and love in all areas of human life, in all parts of the world.

Finally, acting as a channel for the transmission of energy and as an act of service to humanity, pour out the energies released during the meditation process. Use the Great Invocation to visualize light and love and power irradiating and inspiring human consciousness:

From the point of Light within the Mind of God

Let light stream forth into the minds of men.

Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God

Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.

May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known

Let Purpose guide the little wills of men -

The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men

Let the Plan of Love and Light work out

And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.

OM

OM

OM

Energy Healing Meditation

In this simple healing meditation, you send the powerful healing Life Force directly to the area in need of help. This Life Force is the energy behind all healing. Wherever this energy is flowing and in balance, there is health and well being. Wherever this energy is blocked or out of balance, illness manifests.

Steps of Energy Healing Meditation

1. Sit reasonably straight and close your eyes.
2. Breathe slowly, as silently as possible.
3. As you inhale, feel yourself breathing the healing Life Force in through your solar plexus. Picture this Life Force as a very refined, light energy.

4. As you exhale, gently direct this light energy to the afflicted area. If there is not a specific ailing area, disperse this light energy throughout your body as you exhale.
5. Continue until you feel the area has received enough Life Force.

RELAXATION MEDITATION

This remarkably easy and relaxing meditation makes use of a little-known secret about the eyes. Allowing the eyes to rest in a soft downward gaze has an instant, automatic relaxing effect.

Steps of Relaxation Meditation

Sit comfortably with your spine reasonably straight.

Allow your eyes to rest comfortably downward, gazing softly, but not focused on anything.

Without closing your eyes completely, let your eyelids drop to a level that feels most comfortable.

Continue gazing downward... the act of gazing is your primary focus (rather than the area at which you are gazing). You may notice your breathing becoming more rhythmic.

It's ok to let your attention drift a bit. If your eyes become very heavy, it's ok to let them close. If you notice you've come out of your relaxed space, simply bring your attention back to your relaxed downward gaze.

Color Healing Meditation

We are not just our physical selves. We are multi-dimensional beings, composed of an Inner Spirit, a mental body, an emotional body, a vital body, and a physical body.

The energy of these bodies becomes progressively subtler from physical to spiritual. Illness begins with disharmony in one of these energy bodies. If not harmonized, the disease moves outward, affecting the denser bodies, ultimately manifesting as physical illness.

Total healing requires restoring harmony to all of our bodies. This meditation is designed to cleanse and harmonize your various bodies with the healing energies of color.

Steps of Color Healing Meditation

Sit comfortably with your eyes closed.

Visualize a large ball of radiant **Golden light** a few inches over your head. Visualize that ball of light slowly descending through your crown, filling your entire being with golden light.

Imagine yourself absorbing that light as it nourishes, cleanses & heals your whole being - your Spirit and all of your bodies - dissolving all blocked and toxic energies.

Repeat this exercise, visualizing a ball of **Red light**. Continue through the entire spectrum like this, visualizing a ball of **Orange light**; **Yellow light**; **Green light**; **Blue light**; **Indigo light**; and Violet light. Go through the spectrum at whatever pace feels appropriate.

Take some time to visualize yourself in a state of perfect, radiant health.

Inner Light Meditation

This is a meditation for connecting you with your Inner Spirit.... your essence or core Self. It uses the light that is already within you as an object of focus. It's a fairly simple meditation, but is quite powerful, and potentially very deep.

Steps of Inner Light Meditation

Sit comfortably with your eyes closed.

Look at the "screen" that fills the space behind your closed eyelids.

There will be particles, images, or patterns of light on this screen. (Consider anything that is not pure darkness to be a form of light.) Gently focus your attention on the light.

Don't try to create or interpret images. Don't attempt to focus clearly. Simply look at the light with relaxed attention.

If you feel as though your consciousness is shifting, or you are slipping into a dreamlike state, allow it to happen. Whatever you experience is ok.

If you find you have drifted off into your thoughts, simply bring your attention back to the light.

Mindfulness Meditation

The following meditation is said to be the meditation taught by Gautama Buddha about 2500 years ago.

The primary focus is your breathing. However, the primary goal is maintaining a calm, non-judging awareness, allowing thoughts, feelings, and sensations to come and go without getting enmeshed in them. This calm, accepting, spacious awareness is your Core Self... your Essence.

Steps of Mindfulness Meditation

Sit comfortably, with your eyes closed, your spine reasonably straight.

Let your attention rest on your breathing.

When thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, or external sounds arise, simply acknowledge and accept them, allowing them to pass through without judging or getting involved with them.

When you notice your attention has gotten engaged in thoughts, emotions, or sensations, bring it back to your breathing and continue.

Centering Room

Centering is meditation in action... staying in the Light. Centering means remaining in your calm inner center amidst the clamor of everyday life. Being centered means not allowing your Inner Light to be overshadowed by stressful circumstances or negative thoughts and emotions.

When you are centered you are in a state of clarity, peace, and balance. When you are not centered, you are unclear, stressed, off balance.

A good centering technique will require only minimal attention, allowing you to keep the majority of your attention on the activity at hand. Here are some very easy, very effective centering techniques.

Breath Awareness #1

While involved in whatever you are doing, bring some attention to your breathing... not your full attention... just enough to bring you back to your calm center. Breathe a little more slowly and deeply.

Breath Awareness #2

When feeling stressed, take several slow, deep breaths. With each in-breath, imagine you

are pulling all of your scattered energy and attention back to your Self... your calm inner center. As you exhale, let go of all stress and negativity.

Inner Sun

Visualize a bright sun filling your heart chakra... the quiet, subtle energy field that permeates your chest area. Imagine the rest of your energy field as clear blue sky. When stressed thoughts or emotions arise, view them as clouds floating in that sky.

Buddhist Meditation for Jedi

INSIGHT MEDITATION ON STATES OF MIND

Be mindful and conscious of the Here and Now.

Be aware of the state of mind, calm or restless, focused or wandering, clear or cloudy, alert or dull, without desire or with desire, positive or negative, grounded or flighty.

Witness the state of mind rising, staying and passing in consciousness. Notice times of pure observation of the state of mind and times of being lost in the state of mind.

Regard any state of mind as the opportunity for "self" learning and insight into inner life.

Witness a thought, opinion or judgment just as that. Know the difference between thoughts supported with wisdom and unwholesome thoughts.

See the mind as belonging to a process. Observe the presence of the motivation and use of "I" and "my" in the unfolding states of mind.

Be aware that an experience forms through conditions, not through choices.

Be aware of the inter-dependence of events, feelings, perceptions and consciousness forming the state of the mind.

Learn to explore the depths of meditation and religious experiences. See such experiences as the opportunity for insight and realization.

By not holding onto any experience the heart-mind does not become the centre of existence. Realize liberation and the free mind.

INSIGHT MEDITATION ON CHOICELESS AWARENESS

Know that contact with the world through sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

Experience the senses without desire to fix or substantiate anything.

Abide with choice less awareness though experiencing a deep sense of intimacy with all things.

Neither indulging in memories, nor pursuing future dreams, nor looking for something to happen in the present.

Not choosing to focus on the personal or impersonal, unity or diversity, the static or evolution - since all positions refer to sentient and insentient objects.

Allow one's whole being to rest in this choice less awareness.

Allow claims and possessiveness over existence to fade away.

Permit a palpably transforming silence and stillness to pervade one's being.

In this choice less awareness, there is nowhere to go, to stay or to come from. Embrace the three fields of time, past, present and future.

Realize the Emptiness of claims on things, experience or on relative or Ultimate Truth. In this receptivity, regard any liberating insight into the Ultimate Truth as expressions of Truth rather than fruits of "self" effort.

LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION (METTA)

Be relaxed and comfortable. Close the eyes and access a warm, caring, loving heartfulness towards life.

Be aware of the absence of ill will, desire to hurt or hate in the heart so that one experiences an authentic kindness and compassion towards one and all.

Generate this warmth to those who are in the immediate vicinity and far away.

Develop this meditation so that kindness of the heart becomes firm and steady despite the vicissitudes of existence.

May my teachers, community, loved ones, friends and contacts be free from suffering and pain.

May my mother and father be free from suffering and pain.

May my brothers, sisters and relatives be free from suffering and pain.

May people appreciate their inter-dependence with each other and their environment.

May animals and creatures in the earth, on the ground, in the air and under water live in safety and security.

May I abide with a warm heart, clear mind and be free from pain.

May my daily activities through body, speech, heart and mind contribute to the contentment, healing and insights of others.

May I find the resources for the welfare of others. May I be willing to take risks for their well-being.

May all beings know happiness.

May all beings know love.

May all beings be wisely supported.

May all beings be free.

May all beings experience awakening.

A Daily Meditation

Look around your home and find what you feel is the best spot for regular meditation.

Place the items that you feel would be supportive for that place. A mat, sacred object, a flower, a candle, a small bell or just a chair, or meditation cushion. To begin the

meditation, play some meditative music. Read out loud from a book that you appreciate

Play an extract from a taped talk on meditation or spiritual teachings

Bring your mindfulness to the breathing. Practice initially for 15 minutes and extend your daily meditation times. Up to 45 minutes.

You can practice once a day, twice a day, morning and evening,

I am breathing in

I am breathing out

I am breathing in a long breath

I am breathing out a long breath

I am aware of the breath as it comes into my body
I am aware of the breath as it leaves my body
I am aware of the in breath as it enters my nose
I am aware of the in-breath as it goes into my lungs
I am aware of the finish of the in breath
I am aware of the out breath as it departs from my nose
I am aware of the out breath as it departs from my lungs
I am aware of the finish of the out breath
I am aware of the moment (s) before the next in breath comes in
I am aware of the coming of the breath
I am aware of the going of the breath

Meditation on Compassion

I do not have to look very far to seeing suffering in this world.
I know that pity is not the same as compassion.
Compassion calls me to respond, to offer words, gestures, gifts.
Compassion demands something from my love, from concern.
I cannot ignore what I know.
I can only respond as best I can.
I am not perfect.
I am not a Buddha or a Christ
Yet, I can respond.
I can offer something
I can share something
I can express something that reveals a compassionate concern.
I know that my gestures for others are as nothing
compared to the suffering in the world.
Yet, I act anyway,
never expecting anything in return
knowing that it is a small token
but these gestures of love
regularly expressed reveal my humanity
Take the power out of selfishness
In addition, show that we are all connected
all in this web of life together.

Meditation on Absence Of

Sometimes we get stuck with views about ourselves that are untrue, unfair and as a result we place ourselves in the worst possible light. Others also do that when they make harsh generalizations about us. This meditation serves to remind us of the absence of views manifesting towards others or ourselves as "always," "never" "only" etc. This meditation makes clear to us the lack of inherent truth to the tendency to put others or ourselves down due to identifying ourselves with such thoughts or thoughts of others. We become much more mindful of bare actuality. We practice these meditations when there is

nothing in particular going on in our mind.

Right now, I experience the absence of any anger
Right now, I am not caught up in the judgmental mind
Right now, I am not blaming myself
Right now, I am not blaming anyone else
Right now, I know the impermanence of my negative views
Right now, I know the impermanence of the harsh critic within myself
Right now, I know how false it is to say "always" "never" "only"
I am mindful of the absence of unpleasant states of mind
I am mindful of not being in conflict with others or myself
I am mindful of the absence of intense thoughts and ideas
I am mindful of feeling cool inside and not burning up
I am mindful of the absence of fixations about anything
I am mindful of the absence of trying to use my will power
I am mindful that this troublesome mind state
Came and went like a dream.

MEDITATION ON HAPPINESS

There are meditations for each chapter. Sit with a straight back in a quiet place. Slowly and mindfully read the meditation and then spend several minutes silently absorbing the reading. Then read slowly through again at the end of the meditation. Repeat as often as it feels appropriate.

Give 20 minutes to this meditation and then gradually expand the period of time over days or weeks. You can always tape this meditation or any of the others and listen to it in formal meditation times. You can adapt the language of these meditations to suit what feels appropriate to you. Always make sure that you use precise language, not emotive language that can work against insight and understanding.

I am relaxing on the inbreath. I am relaxing on the outbreath
I am extra mindful of my outbreath when my mind easily wanders
I am relaxing on the outbreath
I am staying upright while allowing the mind to rest in the body
I am allowing the brain cells to become quiet to feel harmony
Of the mind with the body.
I feel happy that I am mindfully breathing in
I feel happy that I am mindfully breathing out
I feel happy to have this opportunity to be still
I feel happy to have this opportunity to be silent
I feel happy to have this opportunity to be here and now
I feel happy to be alive.
Right now, there is nothing that I want
Right now, there is nothing that I have to pursue
Right now, I am happy to breathe in

Right now, I am happy to breathe out.
Right now, there is nothing to add to this moment
Right now, there is nothing to subtract from this moment
Right now, I am happy breathing in
Right now, I am happy breathing out.
Meditation for Healing
Be in a comfortable posture whether sitting or reclining
I am aware of the body as a living organism
I am aware of the body from head to toes
As a collection of sensations, vibrations and pulsations
Some of these sensations are comfortable
Showing no sign of difficulty for my mind
Other sensations are unpleasant, uncomfortable, and painful
I want them to go away
But they linger changing from time to time
Let me not fight these painful sensations
Let me not put pressure on myself
Let me develop patience with the process
For I have no choice in the matter
Let me remember to breathe when I need to remember
To be even-minded when I need to be
And even to smile at my helplessness
It is in circumstances like these that I must respond
To what I can respond to
And surrender what I must surrender to.

Meditation on Acceptance

If you are feeling restless, confused not knowing where to turn, try to slow down
Sit in a chair, straighten the back, keep the eyes open and develop a practice of settling
into the moment. If you are feeling too restless to sit in a chair, then walk up and down,
indoors or outdoors or let the body gently sway with both feet firmly on the ground.

May I breathe in and out mindfully three times to settle down
May I breathe in and out deeply to let the waves of agitation get less and less
May I accept that things do not always go as I would wish
May I accept that I am going through a hard time
May I accept that various impulses are arising from within
May I accept that they are arising to pass
May I accept that there are these difficulties
May I respond to the resources available at this time
May I find peace of mind soon
May I find the clarity that lies beneath these waves of unrest
May this meditation and my heart's wish contribute to the wisdom of acceptance..

Meditation on Impermanence

This is a formal meditation practice so that the understanding of impermanence runs deep into the mind. We practice to observe change whether it is the breath coming and going, body sensations coming and going, experiences and thoughts coming and going. It is meditation practice of sustaining awareness of change. We abide as steady as our meditation allows being clear about impermanence. This meditation reminds us that nothing is worth clinging to or being possessive about due to change.

I am mindful of the moment to moment changes of the body
I am mindful of the moment to moment changes in the mind and body
I am mindful of the moment to moment changes in the feelings
I am mindful of the changing painful sensations in the body
I am mindful of the changing painful experiences in the heart and mind
I am mindful of the changing pleasurable and neutral experiences
I am mindful of my existence that is subject to birth, ageing, pain and death
Seeing impermanence reminds me not to cling to anyone
Seeing impermanence reminds me not to grasp onto anyone
Seeing impermanence reminds me not to be possessive around anyone or anything
Seeing impermanence reminds me to keep in touch with this unfolding world
Seeing impermanence reminds me that what arises will pass
To abide in freedom means not clinging, not grasping, not being possessive
May I live wisely in the face of impermanence
May I respond wisely to impermanence.

Meditation on Appreciative Joy

There is much to appreciate in life
that touches a profound place of joy.
It would be a pity to ignore
the daily miracles of existence,
to neglect access to appreciative joy.
Even the sun arising in the morning
is extraordinary, the bursting forth of flowers
and the journey of birds across the sky
above the towns and fields across the landscape.
Appreciative joy reveals through awe and wonder
through children playing in the park
and the unexpected telephone call from an old friend
We have much to be happy about,
Much to marvel over.
Often much more in the inconsequential than in the consequential
Let us stop still for a few moments
So that we can absorb the wonders of the moment

Indoors or outdoors, home or away
Let us dwell upon the undying presence at the heart
of things, so our being knows mystery
at the root of our experience.
It doesn't take a lot to wake up
only an extra commitment to our eyes and ears
that contributes to knowing the deeper intimacies
of an excelled exposure to the nature of things.

MEDITATION ON LIBERATION

Use the upright sitting posture to read slowly through the following meditation.
Liberation and inner joy show the consummation of living wisely. There is a path for
living wisely and there are the profound fruits of the path.
Liberation stands beyond all circumstances
Nobody can give it, nobody can take it away
Liberation does not reside in any particular place
nor found through any particular method, religion or philosophy
It does not depend on such things
For its abiding presence in our lives.
Let me meditate on this deeply
Let insights flow out of my being
So that I can know what sages
Of past and present know
Who have dissolved the sufferings and sorrows
Associated with this world
And abide easily with a freedom of spirit
That knows no limits
Regardless of events that unfolds in this world.
Let me aspire to realize this priceless and immeasurable freedom
So that my self does become the measure of all things
Nor my thoughts and words become thickening views
In this vast freedom, I will know through my experience
My life fits in easily with something much greater.
Meditation on Service
I regard service as the noblest form of human activity
It means putting aside my own interests
So that I offer support to the world of others
No matter what their circumstances
It will be a hard road, this road of service
There is no retirement from it
It signals the sign of a worthwhile life
With the necessity to generate time
For inner renewal as a mark of service for oneself.
There is something noble about deep reflection
that benefits others that benefit animals and the Earth itself.

I may not see the results in my lifetime.
So I have no need to look for them
Instead, I will rely upon the quality and commitment
of the intention and make that the priority.
Praise and blame may come for providing a service to others
Yet, I will quietly remain focused on the intention
knowing that there is no wish to cause harm or suffering
to others.

Meditation on Not-Self

May awareness observe clearly whenever the ego arises
May awareness observe clearly whenever the I arises
May awareness see clearly when the notion of me arises
May awareness see clearly when the notion of my arises
May I be free from trying to build up my sense of self
May I be free from putting down my sense of self
So that I respond with wisdom to events
Rather than being trapped in reactions to the self
May inner awareness reveal a spaciousness around all events
May this awareness accommodate all I call "my life."
May this awareness see feelings as feelings, not as myself
May this awareness see thoughts as thoughts, not as myself
May this awareness see perceptions as perceptions, not as myself
May this awareness see states of mind as states of mind, not as myself
May this awareness see the condition of body as the condition of body, not as myself.
So, that wisdom abides in the face of the inter-action of mind and body.

Students of the Force

Attachment

Danger of the Force

The example below is from a man's POV, because a man wrote the lessons. This does not mean women cannot be Jedi, it is just the perspective of the author.

Attachment is something most humans are oblivious to, and even those who understand it seldom feel they have such an ailment. They think attachment is synonymous with obsession, when in fact, they are far from the same thing. Attachment is holding any personal ties at all, and for a Jedi, such ties are often very dangerous. As anyone that has been around more than a week knows, all things die. *Even stars burn out*, a great Jedi

once told his apprentice. The Jedi know this, and through it, they learn to let go. Friends, family, even enemies. If they do not let go of them, then the memories bring pain, and the pain brings the Jedi out of balance. A Jedi cannot be centered and open to the Force is they are constantly out of balance because of their emotions. The Force gives us emotions to understand the world around us, not to be controlled by them. An emotional hand cannot touch the Force, only its shadow.

Attachment, possession, obsession...they are all things that a Jedi should steer clear from in life, and definitely stay away from when training. The training you all are undertaking is very difficult alone. Compounding it with emotional attachments only does to redouble its difficulty. Training in the Jedi Arts helps the student let go of their ego, and of their self. Instead, they learn that their sense of self is only a shell...a prison keeping their inner self at bay. When a student looks deep inside themselves, they can feel this truer, inner self...and they no longer know who they see in the mirror. This is a normal step for any student, and it changes your outlook on many things.

Now, imagine undertaking their training with an attachment of, say, a girlfriend. This training will be just as hard, or harder, for her then it will ever be for you. You are changing, and you want this change. You want to be the Jedi you see in the inner most regions of your soul. You want to recognize the face in the mirror. However, your girlfriend likes you for who you are when you start the training. This is not to say she will not care for the Jedi you will become just as equally, but your changes will far eclipse that of hers if she is not in training as well. And if this other half does not approve of the training you are undertaking, you will reflexively try to hide it from her. You will try to be yourself around her, and that will not totally work. She will see your changes, but not as quickly. When you revert to your old habits around this person, one day of old habits can undo three days of trying to form new ones. You are comfortable being the old you, and especially around her. You will do what you must to maintain that attachment at all costs, even if it costs you all the hard work you have done in your training. This is why a Jedi must have detachment...because all things die. Even stars burn out.

Walking the Jedi Way **Walking the Path Alone**

We are Jedi. We are members of a sect of esoteric hermits. We may be trying to come together in one community, but by the looks of it, that is not happening very quickly. It may not happen in our lifetimes. It may not happen at all. The thing we, as Jedi, must realize, is that we are truly solitary creatures.

I left everyone to their own devices for three months, and I came back with this announcement. I did it so that you might see that no matter where you are, what you are doing, or who you are training under, you are alone. Thus is the nature of the Jedi Path. We do not make emotional ties, so that cuts out a family life pretty effectively. We do not spend enough time with any one person to befriend them and neglect others who might need us. That takes away a social life.

All in all, we have nothing but ourselves and the Force. Right now, we have this school as well, and one another. That may change tomorrow. This site might just disappear, or the internet might totally crash. Neither are likely, but both could happen. So, we must continue training. We must continue living the life, and being the Jedi we are inside. We must remember to meditate every night, and listen to the Force at all times. We must learn to keep ourselves distant from who we are, or we will lose our ear to the Force, and will fall back into the grind of every other person on this planet.

Do not feel that there are other Jedi training, so you can relax a little, because they are here to help lighten the load. Just as you do not know what a person looks like, or how they sound over the internet, you also do not know if they are doing what they say they are doing. Trust no one aside from yourself and the Force. Trust me to teach you the ways of the Force, but don't even do that totally. I have been around a decade teaching, but I can get stuff wrong. Do not trust everything I say blindly, but on the same token, do not trust anyone else's stuff so blindly you are not open to hear what I say.

Remember, in the end, we are one Jedi against the rest of the world. Just one person, trained in the Jedi Arts, pitted against the evil of the world. It is truly amazing what one person can do. Do that, and you will never fail at anything, and you will be great Jedi.

Trusting in the Force vs. Acting of the Force

There is a difference in trusting in the Force and acting of the Force. Sorry, guys...it gets more complicated. Trusting in the Force, that is the first step. One will never be able to touch the Force unless they have trust in it. That act of trust is the only way to ever find peace in and/or with the Force itself.

Acting of the Force's Will is much more difficult. To give yourself totally over to the Force, and allow it to control everything about you is more than trust, it is true faith. This is that which brings about danger sensing and receptive telepathic combat skills. The Force takes control of you to keep you on your path, either by making you do something, or merely keeping you alive. There are also higher levels of abandonment, and I will give a personal example of one:

I have grown capable of blocking any attacks that come my way, expected or not. This skill also flows out into whatever weapon I hold in my hand. However, when at work, I set our automatic tennis ball launcher to fire at me...and while I could stop anything coming at me by hand, I failed horribly to connect consistently with my *shinai*. The senses changed because there was not a sentience with intent on harming me, or any true life-or-death danger coming at me by some tennis balls. I can only rarely let go of myself enough to block more than one in a row. I did, however, get up to five in a row...once, but that was closer to the end of the session. I got a lot of twos and threes, though. Out of the two hundred or more tennis balls that were shot at me, I blocked maybe thirty.

This shows that the Force does not obey a Jedi. but rather helps them accomplish their task, it aids them in furthering their path. It is not a tool to be used, it is a very powerful

skill, and power brings with it duty. It also does to show one of my weaknesses, showing that we all have the ability to grow, no matter how long one may be on their path. Also, let this example show you that work pays off in time. Do not push, because that is a shoving match no one can win.

Hope

I was speaking with a friend the other day, and I asked him if he was going to lose an amount of weight that his doctor has told him he needed to lose. His reply was simply, "I hope so." The answer bothered me deep into my core, and I began to think of the misuse of the word *hope*.

Hope is a concept that is wasted on the Jedi. Why? because it is merely daydreaming. When people say "I hope so" they doom themselves to a cycle of having a goal, and no way of reaching it. Hope, alone, is nothing. One must act on that hope is they ever wish to attain the dream they 'hope' for.

Determination, dedication, sacrifice...all of it is action fueled by hope. If you hope to get something, then you must work at it. If you want to learn to control the Force, and live like a Jedi, "Gee, I hope I become a Jedi" does nothing more than trying...and there is no try. You must work for your dreams if you ever truly hope to achieve them.

So, keep your dreams, but do not leave them as merely dreams. Act on them, make them happen. Do not leave your dreams to the throw of the dice. Take command of your destiny, and let your "hopes" and "dreams" become your traits and possessions.

Conduct and Mannerisms

The Way of the Gentleman Warrior

It has been said by many that the Jedi are seen as gentlemen warriors...a balance of grace and brutal skill. Due to which, a Jedi must behave in a certain way to promote balance, as well as maintain control over themselves. It has already been mentioned that control over emotions much be kept, but there are other levels of control a Jedi must face.

Mannerism:

Both separate from and connected to the manners each of us is taught as a child, yet greatly more impotent. A mannerism is how one conducts themselves. It could be in public, in private, or in the company of a few good friends, it does not matter. In each instance a Jedi must keep the best possible mannerism. For example, when dealing with someone else that is not being hostile to you, one should stay polite and under control. An angry person might not always calm down when confronted by another calm person, but an angry person rarely calms to a person more upset than they.

Respect:

Being polite and respecting a person, while being close, are not the same thing. One's space and possessions can be honored without showing respect. Just because the polite

approach did not work and has been abandoned, that does not mean one has the right to just destroy a person's property.

Patience:

Patience is a virtue, as it is said. A Jedi must know patience, because not all things are instant, even within the Force. Patience is needed both in a Jedi's training, and in his duties in the everyday world. Many of the people a Jedi will deal with will be a hurried person, trying to get all they can while they can...a creature without patience. The Jedi should be as a cat, watching its prey creep ever so slowly towards them. A cat does not get impatient and run wildly at their prey, but rather waits until it nearly walks right into their hands, and *pounce*. This patience paid off. The cat got their prey, and they did it with as little energy needed. This is not to say everyone we encounter is our prey, but the patience is universal. Haste makes waste, and will lead you down a road no man ever need see.

Appearance:

This is more of a code of how to dress rather than what to wear. Of course, despite all the teachings of "don't judge a book by its cover" we tell one another, people normally judge by first appearance. In order to cause a certain desired effect amongst people, one must look as if they belong. If going in with someone of higher social standing, one should look the part. A slob will not foster the type of respect a Jedi would need from those they help, whereas someone more presentable would. This can be done to where you look as if you belong while standing out, a trick of fashion...or it can be done by falling into the norm and wear the dress of all others, in order to blend into the crowd.

Humility:

Humility is something many of the Jedi have been sorely lacking over the past, and it has ultimately been their undoing. A Jedi is a creature of the Force, merely a spec of nothingness in comparison to their creator. To feel as if you are better than those around you, even fellow Jedi...that is to betray the very Force itself. A humble man is one that can ask for help when it is needed, and they can also give help when asked. They are not too good to explain things to those who neither understand, nor terribly *need* to understand.

Duty:

A Jedi should hold an intense sense of honor and duty. Their first honor should be to the Force, then to those who make up the Force, and lastly to themselves. The Force gives all life the ability to be, and as such, then uses that life to sustain itself. Being a child of the Force, it is the duty of the Jedi to act in the best interests of the Force itself. A Jedi, when their mind is quiet, will "hear" the will of the Force, and out of their loyalty to it, should feel obligated to act upon its will. When the Force has taken one to being under the command of another, their duty is to that person or group. If a Jedi joined one off the many forms of the Armed Forces, despite their geographical location, it is their duty to follow orders, unless the Force tells them otherwise. Lastly, a Jedi should feel a duty to themselves. If they are not under the command of another, and the Force has willed them to make the choice of which path to take, they must be true to themselves and what they

wish to be. Duty does not mean one should be blindly loyal to anyone. Through the Force, knowledge is acquired, and that knowledge should be used when dealing with anyone, no matter how drawn to them you may be. Remember, the Jedi's first loyalty is to the Force, and its will. The previous was only an example of how a Jedi's sense of duty should ultimately be. True, no one is perfect. We may be Jedi, but we are still human, and we will all make mistakes. Also, a single Jedi's sense of duty might be different than what is listed above. As long as their sense of duty and loyalty feels right to them, then that it all that matters.

Sanctity of Life:

Closely tied to the Jedi Ethics of Defense, a Jedi must value life in all forms, no matter how grotesque or despicable. To take a life is to damage the Living Force, and make all Jedi, all life on this plane of existence, weaker. Such a crime against the Force may at times be necessary, but should always be help as a last resort. The Ethics of Defense teach us that, and if one is truly in tune with the Force, they know this to be true

Truth and Fact

A fact is a possibility that has been scientifically proven to exist in nearly all situations, yet there are always exceptions to the rule. A truth is knowledge known by a person or persons, they hold to with every facet of their being, and know it to be true. Through the eyes of the Force, we can and will see a great many things. Some of these things will only be possibilities, or visions meant to drive you towards a certain end. Others, no matter how unexplainable they are, will immediately be known to be true. There is no way to explain these instances with normal science. They are given to you by the Force. You can feel these truths deep inside of you. You know that all the way to your core. When one trusts in the Force, they are open to a whole new realm of understanding. It is a subconscious knowledge that they cannot access directly, only understand as they experience an instance where that knowledge is used.

Right and Wrong

Being a servant of the people, a Jedi must have a clear sense of right and wrong. This should have been taught in the early years of life by a student's parents, and expanded upon by them as they grew older. Being in the position the Jedi are in, to do wrong would not only betray you training, but it would betray your fellow Jedi, as well as your teachers. It is a very hard road to become a Jedi, and to do so only to go against all the hard work you put into getting where you were, you would also be betraying yourself. A Jedi must know such things as morals of the community they are in, as well as that communities laws. To operate without laws is to operate without control. It only breeds the desire to break more law, and that drives you further into the darkness in yourself.

Emotional Balance

This is a lesson on not only the controlling of your emotions, but why it is necessary for the Jedi. Controlling the emotions is a skill that has been encouraged from day one here

at *Students of the Force*, and now, for those who might not have seen the reason behind it, it has come time for me to reveal it.

The emotions, as we all intellectually know, block our ears from the call of the Guiding Force. Without the guiding hand of the Force, we are nothing more than rogue energy workers, rather than Jedi. The need to control and balance the emotions is essential to the proper learning of the Jedi. Does this mean you become a Vulcan, or a robot? Does this mean you cannot feel or express love? Does this mean you will lose your humanity in the sea of apathy? NO!

The *balancing* of emotions is not the denial of them. It is rather the acceptance that they are not needed in most situations where simple calm logic will do. Keeping the emotions in balance is done one of two ways. Either by expressing emotion to the maximum 24/7, all at once...or by leaving your emotions in a state of limbo when not using them. Allow me to tell you that the limbo is much easier, and much safer. Expressing them to their fullest all day everyday, it causes one to not get done with what they are doing...and kind of makes them look psycho.

Leaving the emotions in a state of limbo, which is just *there*, is much more effective. It frees your energies to do the things we are learning to do here at *Students of the Force*. It also allows your mind to truly quiet, and allows us to hear the beckon call of the Guiding Force, nudging us to do things, or telling us things...for no apparent reason at all. All things are done for a reason, and with that in mind, we as Jedi must keep our minds clear, and emotions balanced, and our hearts on the Force

The Darkness Within One's Self

I have spoken many times about the *darkness within one's self*. Now, I know many of you are wondering what I am talking about. In the Jedi Way, there is a Light Side and a Dark Side. Now, these terms are very misleading in that they make people think that the Force is a bipolar entity. The terms do not refer to the Force itself, but rather to the emotions and inner desires of the Jedi. I use the term the darkness within one's self to help guide the mind from the bipolar thought and more towards its true meaning. When one falls victim to their own dark desires: violence, lust, greed, etc...they begin to lose sight of the Jedi Way. This brings about what was previously defined as a Fallen Jedi. It is when they lose their control, and the most basic, primal urges take over.

Now, this might sound like it is not that bad, and one would be able to control their descent into the darkness. Many great Jedi have felt that, and all have failed. I would like to tell you a story of a great Jedi, who lost his way.

This Jedi was a powerful hand of the Force, and as wise as any other Jedi in the Order. However, he fell to his own desire for more power. In this, he took up the practice of using his emotions to fuel his energies, and while he gained great power, he slowly lost control of himself. He gained much power, and lost sight of the Jedi as guardians of the weak, and

merely saw them as weapons of the Force. Weapons he could control. He developed into a bitter, angry person. He had no idea he had Fallen, but he exhibited every single telltale sign of losing his path. This Jedi could write out every single trait of a Fallen Jedi, but was blind to the fact that he was describing himself as well.

The darkness clouds everything, even common sense. Peace is a goal easy to reach at first, but terribly difficult to regain once one has lost themselves in their own darkness. It is not to say that is cannot be done. Even the Jedi in the story above found his way back to the path of goodness, but it was far from an easy journey. Knowing that power makes his continued redemption all the more difficult. Knowing the power your darkness can bring you, it is drug...highly addictive and potentially fatal. One of the most dangerous parts of this darkness is that if you let it even have a little root inside of you, it will spread, like a weed, and slowly cover every aspect of your being. You will fall further and further every day, and not see it once.

This darkness is the hardest thing to see, and the easiest to fall prey to. A Jedi must stay ever-vigilant to deny the advances of their inner desires for power. With time, a greater power will be found out to the Jedi, and their need for the darkness will dwindle. Do not let my words fool you, though. The darkness within you will never go away, you just will not want to use it as badly. It must always be kept from you, though. Once you begin using the darkness, you will not want to ever stop, and knowing it is easier, will reflexively revert back to that when you have a need for power. I hope my words will keep you from walking down that dark and terrible path, but if it does not, remember all things can be undone. Scars heal, stains can eventually be washed away. All things mend in time.

Living Force, Unifying Force, and Guiding Force

The living Force has been described as what keeps the Force alive. Remember, the Force created life, yet it is also sustained by life. The Living Force is the energy given off by our cells as they die, and then are reborn to die again. This energy is what makes up the Living Force. Energy given off by the process of life. The Unifying Force is the energy that binds us together. It is what links one life to another, forming us from infinite separate life forms into the web of life that gives us the ability to interact with others on a metaphysical level. It is what binds all energy, living or not, together in the forms they are.

Think more along the phases of energy: kinetic and potential. the kinetic energy is the Living Force, while the potential energy is the Unifying Force. When life begins, on all levels, it draws what it needs from the Unifying Force, changing it from potential to kinetic. The act of creating life "creates" the Living Force, but it is truly the changing of Unifying to Living. Death works the same way, just in reverse. When one dies, the kinetic energy "dies" with them, thus returning to the potential state in which it began, flowing into the Unifying Force.

Certain skills are products of these phases of the Force. Most sensing skills, danger sense in particular, are skills given to us by the Living Force. Most Control skills are as well. The more abstract and difficult skills such as Future-sight and remote viewing are given to us by the Unifying Force. The Living Force tends to interact as person-to-person or -person-to-object. The Unifying Force, though, interacts on a broader sense, more person-to-cosmos.

I know, you are thinking "The title speaks of the Guiding Force, too", and you are right. The Guiding Force is tied together with the Living Force and the Unifying Force. This is that which guides us all. It shows us our path, and gives us little nudges from time to time, this way and that, helping us to attain our goal. The unexplained changes of heart and mind that ultimately change our life-path, those are products of the Guiding Force.

Now, I have explain these three different types of the Force, but I do not wish to mislead anyone. There is only one Force, *the Force*. One does not sense these three independently, because they are not three separate energies. They are all a part of the Force put to different tasks. If you were to pour water into a glass that was stained with three horizontal, fat colored stripes, and the light shown through it, what would happen? The light would change the color of each section of water, but that does not change the water itself. It is still the same crystal clear water you poured into the glass to begin with. the colors cannot be taken out and rearranged, nor can one drink only the bottom color, leaving the other two in the cup. it is all water; just as the Living Force, the Unifying Force, and the Guiding Force are all *the Force*.

Emotional Control

While the Force is neutral, and open to use as each student sees fit, the Jedi must maintain a strict level of control in order to have unlimited access to the energies and abilities found in the Force. Emotions are not a bad thing, because without them, we would not be human. However, emotions tend to cloud the mind...all of them. Anger, Lust, Passion, Personal Love, Depression, Doubt...all of them are their own little pitfalls in the training and life of a Jedi. All of the emotions I mentioned above, as well as many more not mentioned, cause the mind to act in accordance to the heart. The heart, the emotions, they are irrational and basic primal instincts. As Jedi, we must rise above our urges to act on our emotions, because when they control our minds, thoughts become scattered and tainted, without reason or logic.

Controlling one's emotions is not the easiest thing on the planet a Jedi has to deal with. In fact, it is the single most difficult aspect of Jedi training. A Jedi must keep what is called Jedi Calm, as is described in line one of the Jedi Code. The ability for a Jedi to keep his or her wits about them even under times of great stress, it is a skill that must be learned over a great amount of time. Control is a skill far too few Jedi possess these days, and it makes them all the more dangerous. Without control, the Force can become a dangerous commodity, and those who misuse its power are in great danger. A Jedi without control over their emotions is like a blind man in a crowded room with an Uzi.

He cannot be sure how much harm he had done, but it is unlikely no one will get hurt in this act.

The allure for a Jedi to let go of their control and give into their emotions can be great at times, but resolve is the only way to keep their minds on their training. A Jedi must be reminded at all times to control their emotions. The harder they are to control, the more they should be worked at. This is not to say that one can never show emotion, just as long as they are kept under total control. A smile is not forbidden for a Jedi, nor is a frown. Laughter and jokes are fine, but do not let them get out of hand, for they are by nature distracting, and to lose one's concentration, they might lose knowledge of what is happening in a situation. Such skills will be taught later in one's training, just bare in mind that even a Jedi has a limited amount of things they can keep their minds on.

Patience

Patience is a virtue, as it is said. No truer statement has ever been written, especially when it comes to learning the ways of the Jedi and how to use the Force. The ways of the Jedi are many, and they take up a great deal of time to learn properly. First, one must learn to control their emotions. If this skill is not formed, then a student is doomed to falling into their own dark desires and not being able to find their way back out. That particular task is a life-long building process, because being human, we all have emotions, and that is a fact of being alive. As Jedi, we seek to be beyond our emotions, relying on the Force as our guiding hand.

Another of the many things a Jedi strives to become; it is a warrior. To do that, one must learn to fight, rather bluntly. Just reading a book and trying a few self-defense tricks once or twice isn't enough. If it was, we would not have as many victims in this world, and the Jedi would not be as needed. Because this takes time, a Jedi must realize that the process of becoming skilled enough to defend themselves, more or less other people, is a long and drawn-out process. It, too, is a life-long venture, because when one does not use their skills, they lose them.

The most important aspect of training that requires patience, however, is training the use of the Force. Haste is what one has when they let go of their patience. Haste is a quick way to become self-indulgent, self-centered, and tainted by the darkness in your own soul. The Force is a very mysterious thing, and it is something that takes time to truly understand. I can tell you how I experience everything in the Force, and how I do what skills I have...but that will do you no good, being that you have not truly experienced these things. One should never look for the easy path, especially when training the Force. One can never truly understand the ways of the Force without their experiences. However, one should not long for those experiences, either. Being an "action-junkie" is not being a Jedi. A Jedi does not crave excitement or adventures. They are called to be protectors of the weak and helpless.

In short, patience is the one thing that sets a Jedi apart from other energyworkers. Most other type of energywork focus on quantity rather than quality. They train for personal

gain, or for fun, or for other selfish goals. We, as Jedi, train to hold the heavy burden that will be placed upon us. If we do not have patience, if we do not control our want for power *now*, then we are no better than the corrupt energy-working children that little other online training centers.

Cultural Parallels

Shaolin fighting monks, western Knights, the Samurai, Native American warriors. What do they all have in common? They all accomplish the same goal. They stood up for what they believed in, in spite of closed, and often hostile, minds...and fought for their beliefs when the need arose. Their spirituality made them strong, able, and driven. They are all Holy Warriors of their respective paths. Are they the only ones who fit under such a description? No, far from it. These examples were used due to their well-known nature.

Are they the same thing? Once more, no.

Some saw killing, even in defense, as wrong, so they refused to do so, even if it cost them their life. Others found death in battle a great honor, and revered the dead for their courage. They also saw that death was the only way to relieve the shame of defeat. Still others found killing a necessary evil, and while no shame came of sparing an opponent, none came of committing the righteous sin, as long as it was in the name of God.

The Jedi are a mixture of all, but so eclectic a mix, we are no one group over the others. We stand up for what we believe in, and we do so in the name of the Force. We spread our understanding to those who will listen, and selfishly help those who may turn deaf ears. We also fight when needed...in the defense of the Force and its children. Killing is one thing we do not want to do, ever. To end a life is to weaken the Force, for it is sustained by all life. A time may come, however, when a Jedi might be called by the Force to end a life in order to protect other lives. Combat is not our wish either, but true battle is seen as an almost sacred act, and to die in the name and defense of the Force, it is truly a great honor.

The blend of each of these traits, and more, is different for each Jedi. We hold the Shaolin/Buddhist reverence for all life, the regretful understood need to kill by the western Knights, and the honor of death, as the Samurai. Then Jedi also hold nature, and all life in it, sacred. Some feel it so strongly, that they immerse themselves in it, and others who seldom venture into it, in hopes too not upset the balance of nature. We see such differences in the Jedi everyday. One Jedi may swat at a mosquito, so as to not be bitten, but allow the creature to live. Another Jedi may spray it with bug-killer so that it may die in peace, yet not life to spread diseases, such as West Nile. Other Jedi still might catch the insect in the air, killing it in their hand for the same reason; yet revere it for the fight for life it put up. Others may just stay would of the woods, so that they never have to face such a decision.

No two Jedi are alike in their balance of such traits, because no two people are the same on anything. The Force calls to us because we are different; it is that which makes us

Jedi. So, look to these parallels for inspiration and insight, but not understanding. Such knowledge can only be found in one's self through the guiding hand of the Force. Think to yourself, listen to the voice in your mind, and learn exactly what mixture you are.

Trials of the Jedi Way

The Jedi Way is not an easy path to walk, especially alone, as many of us truly walk it. It is rare to be with another Jedi, unless they are your training partner or student. It is a walk all have trouble with, no matter the person. The Jedi Path is littered with roadblocks of doubt and pitfalls of fear. You will be shunned, even hated, for being Jedi. We are a thankless servant.

There are times you will be faced with great problems that will cause a conflict of you the Jedi, and you the person. That is when you have to decide to follow the path of the Jedi, or give it up and follow your heart. You will want to give up everything you have learned for something some time. This is when you must tighten your belt a notch, and bite down on your natural instincts.

You may see or experience things that will threaten to turn you from the Jedi Path. This is when you must look to your lessons, and remember that all things happen in the Force for a reason, though you may not understand why. You may see a person die for no reason, and then wonder why you could not save them through all the power you have in the Force. Or you may see someone die because the only way to save them is through a skill you do not possess in the Force.

Other trials will be such as controlling emotions on an everyday level. For those who have ever found peace, even for a moment, understand the purpose of keeping that peace. It allows unhindered understanding. You gain access to the knowledge of the Force.

So, stay your course, and keep your dedication, even through the roughest of waters. Do not let doubts fester, and do not fear the future. Be open to your path, and to the Force.

The Nine Tenets of the Jedi

The easiest way to follow the Path of a Jedi is to do just that. A Jedi follows a very strict set of rules, starting with the Nine Tenets of the Jedi. This code is the base for all things learned by a Jedi. It is how all actions are carried out in the name of the Force.

A Jedi:
Respects and protects ALL life in its many forms,
Knows the importance of knowledge and seeks understanding on all levels,
Trains to the best of their abilities to use the Force for the greater good,
Commands their emotions and maintains inner peace,
Works to enlighten others when possible,

Maintains high morals and ethics and acts accordingly,
Is open minded and mindful of those around them,
Is true to themselves, the Force and the Jedi way,
Is free to express themselves as they serve the Force.

These are ideals which I feel should be held by all Jedi no matter what path they are on. I wrote them so that we can all have something to help guide us through our daily lives as we live the life of a Jedi in the real world. They can help us to make decisions and serve as a reminder of how we, the Jedi, should act and treat others. These ideals are not laws or rules, but only guidelines which we can relate to in the real world which we work in as Jedi. I hope they will inspire you all to move to greater heights.

Respects and protects ALL life in its many forms.

A Jedi understands that each life in the world is important, has it's place and reason for being. The Force is an expression of life and unifies all life together, we are one with each other and therefore harm to another life is doing harm to ourselves. As Jedi we should strive to protect life as each is a sacred object which helps to expand and express the Force, therefore it should be treated as such. This also includes plants, animals and insects.

Knows the importance of knowledge and seeks understanding on all levels.

One of a Jedi's greatest possessions is knowledge. It allows us to grow and become a better person, which in turn allows us to be better Jedi. How many great leaders in our world have not been wise beyond their years? Knowledge allows us to help, lead, teach and protect those around us, all of which are part of a Jedi's duty, therefore seek out knowledge of all topics from many different sources. You should never stop learning as there is always more out there and relearning something often yields a deeper understanding. Understanding can be seen as an extension of knowledge, taking it to the next level. You can have knowledge of the parts of a car, but do you understand how it all works? Understanding can be applied to concepts which are not as tangible as others. For example, there are no guidelines about how people interact and what causes people to act in certain ways. But by understanding a person, you are able to see why they act the way they do, this understanding can not be gained from text books which tend to generalize things like this.

Trains to the best of their abilities to use the Force for the greater good.

A Jedi should always strive to learn as much as they can about the Force. A Jedi strives to protect people and with the Force they are better able to do so. The greater the Jedi's abilities in the Force, the better they can help and protect those around them. A Jedi should always use the Force for the greater good, which means that a Jedi may use the Force in any means necessary as long as it is for the good of the masses. A Jedi should always seek the most peaceful of solutions at all times and resort to aggressive means as a FINAL RESORT.

Commands their emotions and maintains inner peace.

There is a wide range of emotions out there and all abilities in the Force are dependant

on some sort of emotion. It is ok for a Jedi to express whatever emotion they are feeling, but a Jedi must ALWAYS command and control their emotions rather than the emotions controlling them. Use each emotion properly and in the appropriate situation, but remember there is always more than one way to achieve a goal. You should only use anger when it is TOTALLY necessary and not because it gets you what you want quickly. A Jedi should find the most peaceful path to prevent disturbing the balance of the Force. This means that a Jedi should remain calm and peaceful at all times, and use other emotions only when it is absolutely necessary to achieve a goal.

Works to enlighten others when possible.

We are Jedi because we have achieved a level of knowledge and growth in our life, because of this our lives are blessed by the Force. This knowledge is not something that we should hoard or keep for ourselves, it is universal knowledge which is there for anyone who dares to seek it out. If someone asks about the Force or anything to do with the Jedi way, that knowledge should be freely given, even if it isn't given through formal training. This knowledge should be given 'when possible' as it is not our place to force our beliefs onto others and tell them that it is THE truth. Help and teach those who are ready for it, allow those who aren't the room and time to grow.

Maintains high morals and ethics.

At all times a Jedi should work to maintain a high level of morals and ethics. We are people who help people and protect the world around them and therefore are respected and looked up to by people. It is only fitting that we act as appropriate role models.

Is open minded and mindful of those around them.

A Jedi should always be open minded as they go about their lives. We live in a world of infinite possibilities and must be open to the different paths and avenues that we could take in our duties. There are many paths to the top of the mountain and the Jedi must choose the best one, this can be applied to all decisions in life. We must also be mindful of those around us as not to neglect or harm them through our actions or in-actions. Even though we may not mean to, we may physically hurt someone, insult them, hurt their feelings or disgrace their beliefs without even knowing.

Is true to themselves, the Force and the Jedi way.

If there was one key life which I could impart to you all, it would be to stay true to yourself. This means finding YOUR true beliefs and sticking to them, no matter what. It also means finding your true essence through meditation and expressing it. When you express your true self you stay true to yourself, though at times this can be hard due to peer pressure or external influences from family or society, it is a truly rewarding experience. When you are true to the real you, you are true to the Force since in essence you are a part of the Force. I do not mean that you are a part of it just because it flows through you, you are a part of it because the only difference between your soul or true self and the Force is that you are slightly individualized. Each wave in the ocean is an individual wave, yet it is still part of the ocean as a whole. As Jedi we must remain true to the Jedi way for it is part of who we are. To betray our path would only be a betrayal of ourselves and therefore a betrayal of the Force. For a Jedi to betray the core principals of

the Jedi way (such as those outline here) in a continual fashion would warrant the Jedi questioning why they are walking this path and if it is right for them.

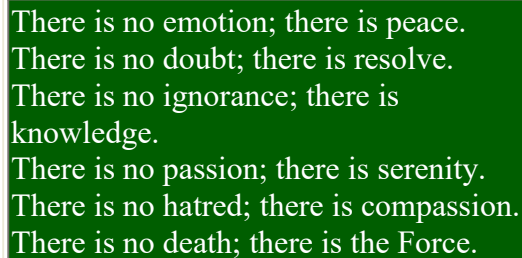
Is free to express themselves as they serve the Force.

A Jedi lives to serve the Force and this is what they should be doing every day of their life, how a Jedi expresses their path is up to them. In this world we all have free will, we are free to make whatever choices we want. We do not have to follow a set of rules or guidelines, therefore a Jedi is free to wear, eat, work, believe and act as they want. No one can force a set of rules or opinions onto you, you are free to express your true self in any way you want. We are all individuals and should express our individualism as we walk the path of the Jedi, making the path individual to each Jedi. This also means that a Jedi is free to forget about these ideals, but with any choice you must also deal with the consequences. Straying from what you feel that Jedi way to be betrays yourself and changes who you are.

If you would like any further explanation please feel free to ask.

The Jedi Code

The Jedi Code is a guideline for behavior at all time. It is put in place to bring the student to an understanding of etiquette amongst the students of the Force. This code is to be followed as strictly as possible at all time. However, as to any rule, there are exceptions to the rule. Be mindful, though...the idea of having exceptions tends to make people find them. Giving in to one's darkness within can cause to a loss of one's purpose, and thus the losing of their path.



There is no emotion; there is peace.
There is no doubt; there is resolve.
There is no ignorance; there is knowledge.
There is no passion; there is serenity.
There is no hatred; there is compassion.
There is no death; there is the Force.

While this tends to be a rather generic and vague code for any one person to follow right away, it is one that encompasses all a Jedi would ever have to face. While there are the exceptions as mentioned above, they are far too extreme to worry about here. I will go into the explanation of each line of the Code instead.

There is no emotion; there is peace.

To an experienced Jedi, this is a pretty self-explanatory line, but for those who might not know its meaning, this line of the Jedi code talks of keeping a state of Jedi Calm. Jedi Calm is different from normal calm in many different ways. A person is calm only when the situation needs it. They have to try to be somewhat calm in the face of tragedy of excitement, which usually only lasts for a moment, or fails completely. The Jedi, on the other hand, rely on their calm to access the knowledge the Force has to offer them. They

must strive to keep this calm at all times so that they might act upon the will of the Force. This calm is taught early on, and strengthened during combat training of the young Jedi. The peace brought on by true calm is the only way to fully access the power of the Force.

There is no doubt, there is resolve.

To a Jedi, doubt is a devastating thing. There is a popular phrase from an old fantasy book that states *Fear is the mind-killer*. This is so terribly true, I felt it only right to include in the proper training of a Jedi. A great Jedi once said "To doubt one's self is only to ensure those doubts." This is an explanation of the vicious cycle that brings about failure in a Jedi. The use of the Force is an act of faith on the part of the student. They do not understand it, and have not experienced it. This, of course, breeds doubts in the student. However, it is these doubts that hold a student back. Doubt and fear are one in the same, because to doubt one's capability to do something is to fear they cannot. Do not let doubts into your mind, or fear and your heart, for they will surely be your undoing.

There is no ignorance; there is knowledge.

This is a line that means many things to a Jedi. First, the surface meaning is that a Jedi should drive for rounded intelligence in all things they have to deal with. They cannot be ignorant of the places they go or the situations they try to help if they can avoid it. This means study hard all aspects of life, not just the Force and the Jedi Way. Learn about anything that one may find useful in some dispute. Learn the law, that is a very important one. A Jedi can do no good if they are in jail. As I said, this line has more than one meaning, and one of its hidden meanings is that through trust in the Force, knowledge is attained. The Force tells us what we need to know when the need arises. It may not come in the form of just instantly knowing, but it might come in the form of stumbling on a book on the ground, or being drawn to read a pamphlet. Even just seeing something can help bring knowledge, helping to 'connect the dots' in your mind. Trust in the Force, and it will teach you much.

There is no passion; there is serenity.

This line reads as if it meant the same as the first. Sorry to say, it doesn't. This line speaks of the physical attachment a person usually has to other people and things. It is good to have drive to do certain things, but to let that drive run everything you are, that is allowing to become a passion, and to overrun you. If you cannot control yourself, how can you ever hope to control the Force or your own inner darkness? This also forbids attachment and possession to other people. To have an emotional tie is to have something blinding you from the greater good. The Jedi cannot afford to let personal feelings invade their thoughts and actions. Their duty is to the Force, and to the Jedi Order. If you were to have to choose between saving a person you cared for from dying, or saving ten people you did not know from dying, chances are, you would choose to save the one you love. To anyone who has ever been in love and said they would save the ten, quit kidding yourself.

There is no hatred; there is compassion.

This line is meant to show the need for a Jedi to foster compassion. A Jedi is a student of the Force. The Force is created by life. Thus, the student of the Force is also charged

with being the caretaker of life. To hate someone is to betray the Force, because you are hating it's metaphorical parent. Your parents give life to you, and in turn, all life gives life to the Force. No, instead of hating, the Jedi are charged to foster its opposite, love. Do not confuse this with intimate love, as was mentioned in the line above. No, this is unconditional love for all life. This is compassion. The Jedi should love all life as if it were their own. Protect it with all known resources, and cherish it's existence.

There is no death; there is the Force.
This line can be misleading to some. This does not mean being a Jedi will make you live forever. Sorry, folks, hate to break it to you like that. No, this shows that through the Force, our essence will never die. Our soul, our energy, it is part of the Force. As such, we are luminous beings encased in a shell tissue and organs, skin and bones. When the body dies, we do not die, but rather we move on to a higher plane of existence. We become one with the Force. Through this, we live on is all Jedi...in all life. What better fate could a child of the Force have, but to live on for all time as part of all its children. The same is true of you. You are made up of an infinite number of the Force's children, their energies recycled back into the Force itself, maintaining its strength.

Training to Become Jedi

Why are you all here, at this school, learning to do what you are? "To become a Jedi" is the most obvious answer. What all does that entail? That is a much more in depth question to answer. First off, let us look at the origins of the Jedi Way. The word Jedi comes from an old Japanese phrase *Jidai Genki*. The phrase *Jidai Genki* means the era of energy, or the lifetime of energy. That means quite a bit to understanding the Jedi Way, as does its Japanese origin.

The Japanese held honor, duty, justice, knowledge, and the ritualistic practice of the martial arts in very high regard...and that is to be remembered as well. When the phrase *Jidai Genki* was used, and looked at as a life of energy, we see what all makes up a Jedi as we know it. A Jedi is a mixture of a warrior, scholar, monk, and sorcerer. All of which is apparent in its precursor if one knows where to look.

We are Warriors. We train day after day, honing our physical selves to a living breathing weapon of defense, self and otherwise. We hold more than just the average fighter, because we hold such virtues as honor, justice, and a sense of duty. This sense of cosmic right-and-wrong sets us apart from the common street fighter or thug. To achieve such a state, one must take up a fighting style that builds honor, duty, and a sense of justice. In this day and age, especially in the United States, it is becoming more and more difficult to find such arts amongst all the McDojo on every street corner.

We are Scholars. We, as Jedi, are charged with not only keeping the peace, and defending the weak...but we are also charged with knowing of local affairs. You never know when you will find yourself in a situation in the field where something you learned that you thought useless may come in handy. It may even save your life. Once such fact is that the human body is capable of moving quicker than the mind can perceive it and then make the hand fire a bullet. Am I saying to go and dodge bullets, far from it. However, if you see someone to be shot and you know they do not deserve such a fate, then you can act with that knowledge, and not hesitate, getting you both shot. We must also know the workings of the human body for being a warrior and for being a savior to the weak. CPR is a good example of such. We must know how to help the lives we encounter.

We are Monks. We are not the police, and we do not go out on a daily basis looking for trouble to undo. You will find that enough trouble will find you, trust me on that. We are meditative in nature and do not tend to seek out trouble. There will be times when we are meant to butt into something that we are not a part of, but only in the case to end a possibly hostile confrontation. We spread our understanding to others in the best terms we have that they understand. We are calm, gentle, and value life...and will do what we must to ensure the survival of another, even if it means facing death with a smile on our faces. Yet another monk like trait we have is the need to grow beyond our emotions. The cloud our minds from the truth, and hinder us on our path.

We are Sorcerers. All the things I have mentioned can be found in many different sects of people, and higher paths. The one thing that sets us apart from those other groups is the Force. We have it, we trust it, we follow it, and we learn to become one with it. In return, it bends to our requests, and helps to further us down our path. A true Jedi trusts the Force with a spiritual/religious level of faith and understanding...and that makes us more than the random energy-worker who knows *Bushido*. We are children of the Force, and ask of it what we need of it. We cherish the gifts it gives us, and see its influence in all things...and all people.

It is only through this mixture that the Jedi Way can be found. If you take out even the tiniest aspect of any of those parts, then you remove what it means to be Jedi. This is what we are here to learn to be, and that is a goal that takes many years to attain. One's training does not merely happen for a few hours a day, a few days a week...and there are no breaks from it. To be a Jedi is a 25 hour a day, 8 day a week, 367 day a year job. We are Jedi in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening, at night, and in our sleep. One cannot discard being Jedi. It is not merely a robe to pull on and off as you like. Just as a true warrior is charged with defending honor in all they are, no matter time, place, or dress...so must a Jedi.

Go, train, rest, then train more. The Way of the Jedi can be found in all that. Go with purpose to better yourself [monk], train so that you might become a more able exponent of the Force's will [warrior], rest so that you might regain your energy and meditate on what it means to be Jedi and one with the Force [scholar], and then train more so that you might know how to ask the help of the Force and its power [sorcerer].

Jedi Stories

These stories were taken from various Jedi websites, and all are fantasy stories written by different people, and, of course, all have a moral, and, of course, are based in the Star Wars universe. Enjoy.

Primordial Echoes

Azura sat on her favorite boulder beneath her favorite tree (it smelled of jasmine in early spring) in the gardens on the roof of the Academy. A group of very young children from the Academy were having play-time in the garden and several of them, having become acquainted with Azura who regularly sat in the garden, played around her as she melded a lump of special clay into a small pot-shape. The children were fascinated by her hair-it was thick, white-blond and hung to her waist, and dotted with crystals on the ends of several braids.

Two of the padawans had clambered up onto the boulder behind her and had begun to gently play with her hair. Azura felt herself sink into a relaxed, receptive mode and recognized the ancient cues her body and mind were receiving. She slipped back millennia to a more primal time, a time when mutual grooming rituals were part and parcel of daily living in lush jungles and arid savannas. A necessity for pest control, and for bonding between members. Azura wondered at the unconscious worlds that lingered within the mind, these echoes of a living so long past they could not possibly have any

bearing on her-someone who traveled in starships and used wondrous technologies. And yet they did still bear on her, deep down in her psyche.

To be aware of these primordial echoes within, she thought, was truly a blessing from the Force. These children were receiving ancient instructions, calling them to stroke her hair, and yet were totally unaware of these conditionings within them. She hoped someday they would marvel at these things as she did, understand how deep their roots ran in the collective unconscious. For these roots, when one began to realize their existence, led to the deepest of understanding of oneself and one's fellows.

The teacher caring for the children called them back to class, and the children scrambled off the boulder. Azura's head still tingled from their touches. She smiled and went back to work on her pot.

The Reason

His tunic damp from perspiring, Jil-Qun walked from the courtyard after a long day practicing with his beloved Lightsaber. The Old Master had felt out of practice lately, so the session had been particularly vigorous. And exhausting.

Leaping about like a wild Taun-taun had taken its toll. His feet ached and knees twinged with sharp complaints on even the fewest series of stairs. "This never used to happen" he thought as he walked along the great hall. Almost dizzy from the weakness he felt. "Not ten years ago, I could do these exercises every other day" he brooded, "Now I can barely finish all the forms in a day, let alone do it again in two days". He had felt the eyes of many students on him as they passed on their way. He had even felt their amusement.

He felt tired... and old.

He made his way along the hall towards his tiny room; the many years of his life washed though his mind in a blur. So many lives he had touched... but only briefly.

A Jedi's life is a lonely life in the end.

An entire life is spent learning how to keep people at a distance, facing harsh trials, fighting for those who cannot fight for themselves only to leave them behind. Defending all life but rarely allowed a life of your own.

Jil-Qun felt every inch of this truth at times like these, times when he knew his long life was soon to draw to a close. His eyes were seeing less and less of the intricate details in the sculptures that surrounded him. His hearing rang from 90+ years of constant blaster fire.

He was not far from his quarters, just down the corridor from it in fact, when a young initiate caught up with him. The young lad was not someone Jil-Qun was immediately familiar with but he stopped when the boy tugged on his sleeve.

"Yes, my little padawan ... how can I be of service?" Jil-Qun implored, with just a wince of sarcasm.

"Oh s-sir? I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed watching you practice, I always learn a great deal from your form..."

Jil-Qun laughed... "Form?"

"Oh yes, you move with great economy, you save your energy and strike with authority." The young Jedi rattled on "I have defeated two classmates using your footwork technique alone!"

"My Footwork?!" He thought out loud, wondering what the boy ment.

"Yes, your footwork is so elegant... other Masters stress leaping and stepping widely. But when I step deeply like that I always loose my balance, your way... stepping lightly in short steps and working your guard... is so much more effective."

Jil-Qun was flabbergasted; here he was thinking no one thought much of his swordsmanship. That his skill was barely noticed (till someone needed saving). But here he was influencing someone just by struggling to keep his swordsmanship in, what he felt was, an acceptable manner. He almost told the young lad that, in truth, he wasn't living up to his own expectations... but he simply knelt down and shook the boy's hand.

"Thank you, that's a very nice thing to say" said Jil-Qun.

"You're welcome, Master Tahm"

The boy smiled, waved goodnight and trotted of to the boy's dormitory.

Jil-Qun creaked back up to a standing position, his old joints nagging all the way. As he staggered into his chamber and lay slowly down on to the sleep-couch, He could not help but feel a giddy joy creep into him.

For at last, this night, he knew his life had value, that he made "a difference"... he was everything he needed to be.

No more... no less.

Balance.

Our Place in the Force

Light snow swirled and danced on the home planet of the Jedi Academy, in an almost endless flow and rhythm. Ice cold water trickled down the fogged window of the uppermost deck at the Temple. Inside the observation tower, several Jedi sat about carelessly sipping cocoa and enjoying each other's company.

"It's the first time the Academy's seen snow like this." stated Ezra Kye Poh, one of the Council's members.

Jedi Master Flastif smiled and let the tip of his finger slide down the glass pane, leaving a transparent streak. He had been traveling for several months now, but had finally returned to the Academy for the holidays. True, he had seen worse climate conditions and even more spectacular ones- but there was something about being in his home to witness it.

"Snowflakes are one of the Force's..."

"... most fragile creations, yet when they stick together..." continued Danny Tam, moving up behind him. He flashed a smile at Flastif, recognizing it to be one of his favorite maxims.

Henry Chapman sighed as he lay sprawled out on the couch, his tunic and pants wrinkled much like his demeanor. He was younger than everyone else in the room, but his dry wit, awareness, and depth were more than a credit to his age. "Yes. If only all of us at the Academy felt the same way. Sometimes it feels like we're all a bunch of snowflakes trying to hit each other off course."

Suddenly, training remote bounced on his stomach. Looking up, he saw Sah'ar Suntoucher across the room, a little less restless but nonetheless full of vigor. Sah'ar wore his usual black hat with matching Jedi attire, and a stick of rare spice from the planet of Kessel hanging out from the corner of his mouth.

Sah'ar shrugged. "Yea, no kidding. Still, you can't wake everyone up to the coffee."

"No, we can't. No two snowflakes are alike, either... if only people could look past the outward things." stated Danny as he turned around to face everyone. Strong winds groaned and whipped against the windows, and it almost seemed as if only the combined Force of all the Jedi in the Temple held its foundations.

Ezra Kye turned her head slightly and sipped her hot chocolate some more. "Do you know when I like to come up here most often?"

All the other Jedi moved to face her, the elder Jedi Master becoming the center of attention.

"... When it snows, when it rains, or even when all is still. When there is no one outside and all that can be heard is the midi-chlorians speaking in its verbosity. When there is only nature. Only the Force. I often take Padawan Roo with me, and we meditate quietly

here."

A smile escaped Ezra's lips as her hand swept about, making small inflections in the Force. "One can only be humbled and understand their place and diversity when there is nothing to discern or simplify."

Din'celebnar smiled, listening to the others speak as she looked out the window at the beautiful crystals. She never got much snow back home, and she always loved watching it fall, hoping it would stick. This time it would indeed stay around. Grinning, Din'celebnar opened her window a crack and slid her fingers along the sill a few times.

"Yes, that's quite true! And it's more fun when snowballs stick together. Like this!" She threw lightly packed snowballs the size of a ping pong ball at Ezra, Hellflower, Sah'ar, Flastif, Henry, and Dan. "Let's go play outside!" Din giggled when she saw that Sah'ar's snowball was smacked onto his hat.

Col-mar quietly walked up to his fellow Jedi and smiled. "Yes, when snow flakes stick together they can destroy any obstacle in their path but with a little heat can be destroyed themselves.

Gifts and Grudges

There once was a poor woodcutter who was barely able to make a living. He was very dissatisfied with his life, but chopping wood was all he knew how to do.

One day he happened to have been working near a lake. While chopping away, he was thinking of his life and his misfortunes, which was getting him angry and frustrated. In blind anger e suddenly flung his axe into the Lake.

Immediately he realized that it wasn't the smartest thing to do. It was his only axe, and without it there was no way he could chop wood, no way he could earn a living, and thus, no way he could eat. And this was a bad time for that, because winter was just beginning to set in. He didn't have any money to buy a new axe either.

"What am I going to do?!" he wailed out loud. "I can't survive without my axe! And the water is way too deep for me to try to swim and look for it..."

As if he didn't have enough problems, suddenly there was a loud rumbling, the water began to churn, and then, with a huge geyser blast, a water demon appeared.

"Woodcutter!!" He roared. "You dare insult me by throwing your axe on my head?! Do you think this lake, my home, is some kind of refuse lot to toss away old things you no longer want?!"

The woodcutter was beside himself with fear. "No sir, "he replied," I did not mean you any harm, and no insult was intended. I didn't mean to throw the axe into the lake; it was just out of rashness, and act of foolishness. I am sorry, and apologize to you sir. I need my axe in able to live, because if I cannot cut wood to sell, I will starve."

The demon thought for a while. "Very well. If all is what you say it is, then I will let this pass, and return your axe to you." The demon than produced an axe towards the woodcutter. "Is this your axe?"

The woodcutter blinked. It was an axe all right, but it was made out of bright gold, beautiful to look upon. He was amazed, but it was not what he was looking for.

"No sir," he replied. "That axe is made of gold, and mine was a plain, poor one. This is not my axe."

The demon nodded. "What about this one?" he asked, and produced another one.

The woodcutter was amazed again. This time there was an axe made of pure silver before him. Still he shook his head. "This isn't my axe; mine was a plain one, and this one is made of silver."

The demon nodded again. "What of this one?" he asked, and produced a third axe.

The woodcutter smiled with recognition. "Ah, *that* is my axe! Plain wooden handle and simple steel. It's not much, but it gets the job done. Thank you very much for returning it."

The demon smiled. "You are welcome. And since you were honest enough to choose your true axe, I will instead give you the gold one as a reward."

The woodcutter couldn't believe it. There he was holding an axe made of gold in his hands, glittering in the sunlight. He looked up at astonishment at the water demon, smiling widely.

"Thank you thank you thank you very much sir!!" He cried out happily, and with that he ran off back into the woods, extremely pleased with his good fortune. "Imagine all the trees I'll fall with this magic axe!" he thought to himself.

Eat and Drink

I was not in a position to share this last year, but some of you may have wondered why I disappeared from these hallowed halls. The truth is, I was sent on a series of secret missions by the Council.

One of my missions last fall involved soothing a dying colony of Primaris settlers on the

Moon of Mikallen. They had been stricken by a rare viral strain that wiped out their entire sect in a mere two weeks. Apparently this micro-organism came to their world, uninvited, on the back of a meteorite. By the time I arrived it had run its course, and was no longer viable. Hence, I was safe from infection.

Believe it or not, what I discovered is that most people become MORE civilized when they find out they have a few weeks to live. It is very rare that someone becomes MORE of a cad.

The human being is a remarkable creature.

Most people in this predicament suddenly learn to live more authentically, sharing their deepest feelings with all people. Living carefully, apologizing for slights, taking a deepened interest in their legacy they become almost angelic. This is the spirit of "Carpe Diem," I think. Not that we should be like animals, but that we should strive to the highest human ideal as though our lives were finite. Because they are.

We're all on death row. Some just get there faster.

Because the Jedi Order encompasses so many different cultures and species there really isn't an organized belief system. About the only thing we can say for certain as Jedi is that contact with deceased Jedi comrades has been documented and even holographed.

Aside from that, we bring our cultures' view on life and death into battle.

When I was a Padawan, my Master taught me the view that life is a classroom. This idea has its roots in the Chandrilian belief in reincarnation. He told me that our behavior in this "classroom of life" has direct bearing on what happens in the next classroom. For example, will you pass the exam and move on to the next level? Or will you fail to study and be held back?

For me, there is a real impetus to "get it right" the first time, as it were. I know that if I don't I am going to see the same old things again and again. If they are painful to me now, they will be more so the next time around.

It is easy to know when you are being tested in life's classroom. For example, he would say, "any time you feel like yelling, any time you feel like cheating, any time you feel like stealing, any time you feel like hurting someone else so that you can move forward, you might as well be at a desk with a paper quiz before you. Better yet, imagine Headmaster Yoda leering from the doorway."

There is a very special song that my old Jedi Master used to sing before he died. I feel it is appropriate to share it with you now.

It often happened late at night, when we had built a fire and I was nearly asleep. For some reason he didn't often sing in front of me when I was awake. Maybe he was waiting for a

private moment; a sacred bit of time without me nipping at his heels.

It was times like that that he would commune with his own Master, long deceased, who probably taught him the song in the first place. I seem to recall him saying that it was much older than that. (I also think this was about the time he would take a sip off the old hip flask!)

Whatever the reason, he would look up at the stars, waiting for me to doze off. But I wanted to hear the song again, so I would hold off as long as I could. And just about the time I fell from the fence into the pastures of the dreamworld, he would start to sing this song to himself...

"Some say Jedi never lie; but it isn't true.
It only matters that you try to live each day anew.

The reckless fly their starships high; and sacrifice their crew.
But pirates will be pirates, why? It's for the things they do.

But...

We're on our way to angels, son; upon a Dego moon!
With every precious feather won; we'll be arriving soon.

So eat and drink and laugh and cry; love the midnight through.
Tomorrow you and I shall die; but alas, we never do."

What Is It?

White ignited her puny pensaber and pushed the blade straight through the palm of her left hand. The pensaber hung there, its blade on one side of White's hand and its hilt on the other.

Jedi and padawans wandered through the courtyard of the academy. White didn't notice them. Sweat poured down her face in a salt-waterfall of rain. She was living in a moment rather than in real life.

With little effort, the pensaber could go anywhere but forward. To move the pensaber forward would require White to destroy more of her flesh. The hilt was too large to fit through the existing wound.

White could easily swing the pensaber in any other direction. The angle of the swing would determine what part of her hand she would lose. A finger, maybe two or half her hand could disappear without much trouble.

White realized that the only way to remove the pensaber from her hand with no further injury was to pull it out backwards. To withdraw.

Somewhere deep inside White boomed the voice of Murky. Murky raged against withdrawal. The universe must go forward; mistakes were necessary if White expected to reach her goal on time.

White quelled the voice of Murky. She was a Jedi knight. A relatively tame and unadventurous one perhaps, but she would not turn towards the Dark Side, even if it was only Murky.

Gathering up all of her strength, she stared down at her hand, at the result of her mistake. White didn't even bother swallowing her pride -- what would be the point? She pulled the pensaber backwards, out of her palm, and wrapped her bloody hand in her robe. White would not have been surprised if her own left hand had slapped her across the face, to knock some sense into her.

White stood up, heedless of the pain crossing from her left arm to the right hemisphere of her brain. Her robe fell to her feet and her hand was exposed to all of the passersby. She switched off her pensaber, tucked it into its hidden pocket protector, and sat back down.

This time, White decided to battle the old ennui without the help of a fiercely glowing blade.

"So, which is it...?"

White heard from behind her.

She turned and saw the old white beard and faded brown robes of Jil-Qun Tahm kneeling down to be on eye level with her.

"What do you mean?" She said making some attempt at hiding the wound she had just inflicted on herself.

The old Jedi tucked a long strand of white hair behind his ear and gently seized her hand from its hiding place under her other hand. He looked down to see the burnt skin surrounding the small hole... he frowned.

"Mmmm, that's a real good one... straight through... you missed the bones, but... "He looked more closely "...yup, I can see daylight. Really impressive though" he smiled at White.

"Look, I'm not trying to... I mean..." White searched for the correct retort.

"Yes dear, that's why I asked..."

"Asked what?" White said, bored with the game already.

"Which is it? Is it ... the joy of agony? ... Overcoming your fears? ..." Jil-Qun leaned in close...

"....or do you maim yourself... just to feel *something* ...anything at all?"

The old warrior politely waited for an answer, smiling softly.

White blushed (she had been doing a lot of that lately) and averted her eyes. It was kind of hard to explain, because White thought that she was completely alone in her feelings. She was probably wrong, and she knew it, but it was taking too much effort to face her problems and she had all but given up on eloquence.

"Well..." she meowed...

Jil-Qun laughed at her attempts to stall. "Just tell me which it is. The answer might be an expression of feelings, or it might be a decision." He smiled.

White knew that it was time to do or do not. There was no try, at least not where Jil-Qun was concerned.

"I have absolutely no clue why I pierced my hand with my pensaber. But it wasn't because I needed to feel something. It might be because I needed to feel something comprehensible." A med droid circled in on Jil-Qun and White and began scanning White's wound. White shot Jil-Qun her best you're-too-perceptive-for-your-own-good,-old-man,-but-I-appreciate-it look.

Jil-Qun acknowledged the look with a friendly smirk. White continued. "Piercing my hand with my lightsaber is like a mistake I made in the past year. It was the silliest, most immature, foreseeable, unimaginative, Force-damned mistake I could have made. I should have been stronger.

You see, I had undertaken a mission. Not our famed mission of the stinky Hutts, but a mission in my life away from the Academy. And I fell on my face so hard that physics dictated that the little atomic forces separating my face and the ground dissipate. Kaput, bam, no more White. Just a dismal puddle of attempt that couldn't muster the will to move on."

Jil-Qun had long since mastered the art of listening, and he was patient. True to his nature, he was a creative listener -- something quite rare indeed. He asked White, "You must know that this happens to everyone. Why did your failure hit you so hard?"

White responded, "That's just it. I didn't know it happened to everyone. I thought it happened to everyone except for me. I don't mind being a quitter, I don't mind tucking away my pensaber and returning later when the time is right, so long as quitting is my choice. Never, ever before have I been unable to do something I put my mind to. Never,

ever have I felt like something conquered me. I guess it completely changed my perception of the Force.

Something along the lines of the Force is bigger than me -- I'm not a goddess.

That realization made me face my real choices. Not the choices a Jedi makes when she mistakenly thinks she can do anything, but the choices a Jedi makes when she knows her limits. It is necessary for me to admit that I failed, that I can't succeed without trying again. The 'trying again' part is what was getting to me. Before, I would try harder. Maybe even try something new. But never [she shuddered] try again.

I feel like a nerd in mandatory summer school. Inept.

But I've resisted the call of Murky, who was telling me to pretend that I hadn't really failed. That I could keep on keeping' on and everything would work itself out. That was the darkside calling. Reality is forcing me to retrace my steps."

White looked up through her eyelashes at Jil-Qun. She hoped her attempt at explaining, combined with her I'm-just-a-wet-behind-the-ears-padawan,-after-all look, and would protect her from one of Jil-Qun's inevitably astute observations.

But the Force told her otherwise. The Force told her that Jil-Qun just might have more to say

The old grizzled warrior thought for a moment... this was just as serious as he had suspected. Not only that... he was a bit out of his depth... as in the past few years him having dealt mostly with surly bureaucratic officials, Dark Jedi, calloused starship pilots and such.

He pondered the picture young White had painted for him... searching, turning the image in his mind.

After a moment the old man took a more comfortable position on the ground sitting cross legged. The great hall seemed just a tad quieter... and the old Jedi told a gentle tale.

>>

"One year, my fourteenth one I think... as Padawan to my Master,
We walked the ghettos of Alderaan, preventing grave disaster...

'Save me' the Twi'lik love slave wailed, unto us for compassion.
There are rules we Jedi follow, towards our mission go our actions.

But soft of heart my Master was, he carried her from dire harm.
This act I knew "Forbidden was" and seethed in mute alarm.

Once we had done what she had asked, we went to meet our fate.
We stormed the twisted ganglord, flung him out the city gate.

I did not speak about my feelings, but down inside my stomach churned.
I still could not believe it, Master's crime inside me burned.

My heart my Master knew too well...

He spoke to let me know.

'Are you still carrying that girl?'

'I put her down days ago.'"

>>

Jil-Qun then softly smiled at White...giving her the old You-must-not-allow-yourself-to-dwell-on-what "was"... it-is-a-cage-one-builds-around-ones-mind... look.

For a moment White simply looked at Jil-Qun not saying a word.

And then she smiled. It was the obvious, but still natural continuation of the thread.

"We stormed the twisted ganglord, flung him out the city gate," she repeated.
"Wonderful. Exactly the correct decision. You have helped a great deal, Jil-Qun."

The med droid had wandered away, in search of something else to mend. White decided that she would rather look for something else to enjoy.

"I hoped that you might explain what you see in the Ganglord? What makes you chose that line out of all the others?"

Jil-Qun wondered, speaking just as White began to walk away.

White stopped in her tracks, rocked back and forth on her feet, leaned a little too far over her heels, and tumbled backwards onto the nicely-mown-but-still-somewhat-wild-and-exotic,-smelling-like-legal-spice-and-fresh-memories grass. The med droid slowly began drifting back over to the bruised Jedi. One could almost hear it sigh in exasperation.

"I love that line in your tale, dear Jedi, because it is full of life," said White. "Action, spunk, humor.

The ganglord represents my pride, the dastardly obstacle that was preventing me from starting over in my mission. If I am to succeed, I can't pretend that I did not fail in the past. I can't move forward on anything less than an honest foundation."

Jil-Qun nodded, although his thoughts were not apparent to the younger Jedi. She wondered what other stories Jil-Qun might have to offer from his days as a padawan. They might make an interesting anthology in Jedi Lore -- along with stories about other venerable knights such as Dregyn, Master Kett, and Ezra when they were young...

But White knew that everything in life does not need to be crystal-clear. In fact sometimes she preferred her imagination, which she considered an equally valid part of life, anyhow. She smiled at Jil-Qun and began to levitate. White was now more sure about some of her footsteps than others.

The Droplet of Change

Padawan Roo Sunrunner Poh was fixed motionless on a tiny drop of dew as it journeyed the spine of a large Ganta leaf. Only just making its presence, the sun turned the Caloonian sky orange and clued the nocturnals to burrow for the day.

Ward of Jedi Tam for only the morning, as Ezra Kye convened with the Masters, Roo remained to herself as her guardian read from one of his many books strewn about. Jedi Tam, whose slender frame sat leaning against a rock, was agitated from the changes at the academy. He sought refuge in his studies, but found no solace.

He drew his tired eyes from the words and noticed the padawan's pensive gaze as the droplet voyaged from tip to tip. A single finger hovered over the liquid morsel, and he could see that Roo wanted to disrupt its spinal journey, but she hesitated every time.

"Jedi Tam," Roo requested. "If I so desired, I could change the course of this small drop of water?"

"Yes," her youthful guardian replied as he marked his page with a thumb. "But why? Why would you change the course of the water? It seems perfectly fine where it is."

"The Ganta leaf no longer lives," she said. "It has fallen from its tree. It has had its time on Caldoon, but the season has changed. The water will not save its life."

Jedi Tam pulled his body from the rock and rested his arms over two knees. He listened for more.

"The water is good," the juvenile continued. "It gives life to Caldoon. This droplet would do better if I should capture it and endow a sapling. For it would change the sapling's life, and help it to grow on this dry planet."

The Sunrunner took the dry Ganta leaf and poured the fluid sphere over a new growth. "You see Jedi Tam, though the leaf is no more, it once provided beauty, and now, it provided a way for me to nurture a "new" beauty.

Roo looked over her shoulder, and fixed a chestnut eye over her guardian.
"Change...it is often times difficult to understand and accept, but it is here for a reason."

With that, she dashes towards the warmth of a new sun. Jedi Tam placed his book aside, rose from his position and followed suit.

The Design of the Force

Ezra Kye Poh and Danny Tam spoke softly as they ambled in circles around the Jedi Academy Library, the sound of their footfalls echoing throughout. "You're really doing a job with this Library!" Ezra commented as her fingers graced across the spines of a row of books.

The younger Jedi gave her a lopsided grin and shook his head. "Hardly, Ezra. I spent the last hour removing highlighted marks in the books, and erasing comments people wrote such as 'Don't eat Yoda's urinal cakes'".

A soft, grumpy voice chimed in behind them. "Heard my name, I did..."

Dark brown robes whirled in unison as the two Jedi turned in shock. There, the eight hundred year old elfin Jedi Master Yoda stood before them, resting on his gimer stick. Yoda had decided to put his duties at the Jedi Temple on hold in order to give some counsel to the Academy, in light of all the recent departures of Jedi. It was late in the night, and the two Jedi had believed everyone to be asleep beneath the twilight.

Although Danny had not yet attended any of Yoda's lectures, and Ezra had personally greeted the Master when he arrived in the hangar, the two stood equally surprised and in awe. They bowed in pious respect, and then proceeded to move closer to engage in conversation.

Ezra smiled and leaned against a marble pillar. "Master Yoda, it's an honor. What brings you out this late?"

"Ah, sensed you two I did, in my meditation. An honor it is, to meet two fine Jedi as well." Yoda responds, his eyes blinking sleepily.

"Master Yoda, I was wondering... wondering if you could foresee the direction of the Academy." asked Danny.

Yoda closed his eyes and hummed, as if to enter a meditative trance. Suddenly, he jumped to a state of liveliness and poked Danny in the leg with his wooden stick. He began laughing in short, devilish bursts. "He he he! Silly question, you ask of me, Jedi Tam! Only you, and the Jedi of this Temple, can determine the future."

Ezra Kye and Danny exchanged meaningful glances and began to laugh as well.
"Powerful Jedi, you two are. Watched you a long time, have I, along with others. Worry

not, you must, for reveal itself will the design of the Force, when continue your studies and cultivation you do."

The female Jedi shifted in her robes and brushed her short hair behind her shoulders. "There are so many changes that are about to take place, with so many different people now. It is hard for me to understand how things will work out."

A low rumble of amusement escaped Yoda's throat, and he smiled a toothy grin at her. "Why seek you, to understand? Famous saying there is, in the Jedi texts. 'In your search to understand the Wampa, you will be too close to the teeth to realize what it is for.' Eat you it will! He he he he!"

"I have to admit I've learned that the hard way." responded Danny with a wry smirk.

Ezra shook off Dan's comment and rubbed her chin thoughtfully. "So Master Yoda, you're saying if I keep my distance, then the will of the Force will become apparent?"

"Yes yes, true this is to a point. Symbiants with the midi-chlorians, we are. If listen and work with it, we do, then do the same the Force shall, for us."

Danny's eyes narrowed as he watched the wizened green Jedi pace slowly, his gimer stick rhythmically tapping the floor. The mysteries of the Force were often so deep and complex, and here was a Jedi who had eight hundred years of experience. And even then, Yoda's message was still something of a riddle to him.

As Yoda began to walk off towards the exit, he spoke softly over his shoulder. "Similar situation, the Jedi Temple on Coruscant faces. The Chosen One, a young man is. Know not, do I, what the Force has in store for him, or the Jedi of our time. Not for me to decide, is it... but guide him we shall, as must you with your own. Perhaps a game it is we play, with the Force."

"Make a difference; some shall, within this galaxy of stars and rocks. Others... will destroy themselves with their ignorance and anger. But, as long as the Force binds us and this galaxy... balance shall remain, ever shifting and changing. Deceptive to us, it may appear. But to the wise Jedi..."

And with that, the Jedi Master disappeared into the darkened hallway.

Conversations With God

Did I ever tell you about the time, when my master, the venerable Birta Baadu, was called away to settle a dispute in the K'fau system? I was quite young at the time, but I will never forget the valuable lesson it taught me. As I recall, a civil war was pending, over some dispute between government and religion. My master treated it very seriously, and it was decided that I would go with him, in order to learn a little of how these disputes were settled. Of course, we were given datacards packed with information

regarding the system, its politics, its peoples, and of course, the religion. My master studied it diligently, and asked that I did the same, telling me that in order to be a good diplomat/mediator, that I had to understand things in the same way as the disputers understood them. So, he told me, it was imperative that I read their book of Holy Scriptures, in order to understand where their angst came from. To me, this seemed silly: God? There was no God!!! There was the Force!! We had the Force....that was why we were sent to dispute these things: the Force provided us with our answers!!! Not these pointless rituals and empty prayers!! If this was not so, then why would we be on this mission?

As we boarded the ship, launched and readied for a long hyperspace journey, master sat at a desk in our chamber, and began to study the cards. He insisted that I do the same. So there I was....I sat on the floor, and started to sift through the data: primary system, one star, 6 planets, 2 inhabited, three moons also could support life and had nominal populations, major items of trade were agricultural products, and some light industrial products. It sat on one of the more minor trade routes out towards the rim. Two endogenous races, one on each planet. Each kept themselves to themselves, one reclusive, and the others: Farinas, were the ones, which we were dealing with. A simple enough people, bound by a strict moral and religious code, they went about their lives in as simple a manner as possible, trading with the Federation, and whatever independents that happened to come into their system. Owing to the low-profit nature of the goods in which they produced, the Federation and the Senate largely were uninterested in the system (Hence, our being assigned to the job!!!), and even allowed some independents to gain small monopolies over trade within the system. This was all well and good. I could understand why my master wanted me to know this...a brief history of the system, an outline of the politics (Ruling clans and elected local leaders, large input from the religious priesthood), imports, exports, how the people looked etc. Fine. I read it. Then came the book of scriptures...

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw master studying intently. I knew, however, that he would notice if I started fidgeting, or put the cards down, so I started to read:

‘In all things, one must supplant oneself to the will of the Divine lord’

‘The Lord is one. Superior. The Lord’s thoughts cannot be known, only observed, by their manifestation in the realm of worldly knowledge’

‘Do not seek to know the mind of the lord. Just seek to hear the words’

PREPOSTEROUS!!!!!!! Why did these fools read this rubbish?!? I sat there smugly, knowing that they had it all wrong. I was so smug; in fact, that I realized how easy it would be to solve this dispute: we would just go there, tell them the Force was the only ‘divine’ power in this galaxy, and demonstrate its power. Then they would know how silly their religious squabble was....and they would know the true nature of the galaxy. A valuable lesson indeed had been dealt to me. I didn’t need to read any more of this pointless babble. I was sure master felt the same way.

A while later, the ship’s captain called over the intercom that we had reached our

destination and the ship would soon be reverting to realspace, so we were needed to transmit our clearance codes to the Faurian authorities. We had had little chance to discuss matters about the dispute, just enough time to read through the texts we were given. So I had no time to ask my master exactly how we were to demonstrate the true power of the Force to these people. I assumed it would involve lightsabers, and some TK tricks, etc.....

Master and I entered the cockpit of the craft, and buckled ourselves in, and watched as the hyperspace starlines shortened into individual stars, and the system's star and planets winked into view. Within a short while, we were hailed by the Faurian authorities, and asked to transmit our clearance codes for the system. Master did this, and we were directed to land in a small spaceport in the main settlement on the planet, Fauriana City. After an uneventful landing, master and I took our places at the ramp, as the pilot lowered it. We walked down it into the cool, Faurian morning sunlight, and the fresh, sweet smell of naturally scrubbed and circulated atmospheric air...just like back on Chandrila. I wasn't ready for what happened next. As we began to walk out from the ship, missiles of food and soil and other filth were hurled at us from people in all directions. 'Conjurers!!!' 'Cloaked demons!!' the people jeered....'Go home!! We don't want your stinking kind, here!!!'...'LEAVE!!! WE DON'T WANT TO WARP OUR MINDS THE WAY YOU HAVE THE REST OF THE GALAXY!!!!'....I concluded at this point that these people probably found their religion as pointless as I had. After all, it taught them a strict code of morals...and *they* certainly weren't being adhered to!! I began to repel the missiles using Force techniques: hurl them back at my assailants. Missiles were raining down upon us, and I turned them all back on their throwers...which, of course made them even more angry 'they use their sorcery on us!!' they cried. 'Evil men!!!' Suddenly, I sensed a strong 'hand' held over my ability to use the Force. The missiles, after a redoubling of efforts, began to rain down upon master and me once more. Master turned and glared at me...'do NOT do that', he said quietly, as the barrage continued, and we continued to walk down our designated walkway towards a diplomatic reception with the ruling house and the representatives. From my knowledge of politicians, I assumed that these people would be no different to those outside. But their missiles would be hurled from the shadows, and wrapped in sweet-smelling compliments, gifts, sugar-coated offers, back-handers, and smiles all around.

But at least they wouldn't hurl missiles at us.

So imagine my surprise when we entered the reception, and found the councilors to be very easy-going. Conversing about such matters as farming, rearing of cattle, fermenting of grain, brewing of ale, and other such things....they genuinely seemed to be such nice people. My master turned to me and smiled as we entered, nodding to me in apparent agreement of my appraisal. As we entered, we were welcomed, and offered gifts: cold weather jackets made from the finest hide, and walking boots of the sturdiest leather. Indeed, this seemed all very out of place. It was as if we were now speaking to the people who followed the religion, and that outside we had met the diplomats!!

As we ate lunch, current affairs started to be discussed between master and the councilors.

It appeared that the ruling houses wished to begin importing such things as landspeeders, engine-driven harvesters and ploughs, machines for extracting milk from their animals, etc in order for their harvests to be made more successful, and their manual workloads to be reduced. The detractors, meanwhile, strongly opposed this, saying that these 'playthings' were merely a distraction. And while the supporters riposted this with the fact that work was also a distraction, the detractors seemed to think that work was what made one understand their faith that much more. But then, it was stated, if one had more free time, one could spend more time contemplating one's faith, and communing with one's Lord.

Master sat and listened to the details of the nature of the schism. Earlier, in reading the information pertaining to the religion of the people, we had noted that the religion is ministered by a body of priest-like people: people, who are employed and compelled to spend their time in contemplation of one's faith, religion, Lord, and place in the grand scheme of things....and so, what did these people have to say on the matter. The reply given was that the Chief priest; the Papa, as he was affectionately known, was in retreat. He was contemplating the issue, and trying to decide upon a verdict. 'Unbelievable!!!' I thought to myself, 'This guy was as dumb as the rest of them!!! Did he want to start a war??' As dinner wore on, issues pertaining to the dispute were told to master, and he merely sat and listened, without passing judgment. As any good mediator knew, it was best to gain the other half of the argument; too....but for this to happen, Papa had to come out of seclusion.

We were then led to our chambers for freshening up after the meal. After I had exited the refresher station, I knew I was in for a lecture....as indeed I was.

'Young man, why did you try to use your Force powers to deflect those missiles?' He asked.

'I just didn't want to be hit.' I shrugged, nonchalantly.

'There is a difference between preventing oneself from being hit, and retaliating, my boy...I think you may have crossed the line between the two!' he replied.

'But master! I was acting in defense!!' I insisted.

'So why the OFFence, then?' came his curt reply. I sighed. He had a point...

'I apologize, master. It was wrong of me to do that.' He nodded.

'Why so?' he intoned.

'Because I was attacking them, and lowering myself to their level, master.'

He nodded, satisfied. 'Let us discuss why I didn't want you to defend yourself with the Force, then' he continued...'any ideas?'

I shrugged, 'not really...I can't see why I shouldn't have defended myself from getting filthy!' I replied.

'Simply, because it antagonizes the people!! Use of the Force infuriates them! They see it as ungodly!'

By this point, I couldn't hold myself back any longer...I simply wanted to explode! I blurted my feelings out to my master, 'But master!! Of course it's ungodly!! Their religion is stupid!! There isn't a GOD!!! There is merely the Force, and the sooner we can demonstrate that to them, the better!! We should make those idiots realize that their

silly devotion to a non-existent bei-‘

‘Calm down, lad’ master said softly...but I ignored him

‘-ng is nothing but a bunch of pointless play-acting! The Force is what contro-‘

‘Ursssk.....’ master said, his tone becoming a little more commanding,

again, I ignored ‘-ls and binds us...not this silly boss-man!! These fools think they are better than us, when they cannot possibly understand, less control, the forces, which bind this uni-‘

‘PADAWAN!!’ master barked, as he placed a hand firmly on each of my shoulders. The tone, with which he spoke, implied many things to me: one, he was angry; two, it was me who made him angry, and three; if I didn’t concur, I would be scrubbing the Academy crockery for weeks to come!!! I shut up.

‘Where did you learn such information? Who told you this?!?’ he enquired.

‘Nobody’ I stated, defensively...‘it’s a given! There is no God, because the Force determines our reality...it’s will is what we supplant ourselves to...not some silly quasi-physical bei-‘

‘ENOUGH!!’ he commanded; ‘You read their holy text? The first line.....’ he asked.

I hesitated slightly....‘Come on!! You must surely have read the first *line*!’ he asked.

I stammered; ‘In all things, one must supplant oneself to the will of the Divine lord’

‘OK’....he said, in a lighter tone...‘and so we use the Force in place of it...why is this better?’ he asked....

‘Because when we make the Force our ally, we gain the ability to manipulate it’s flow’, I said ‘And hence, we are closer to the truth than they are, because they can’t do likewise’

‘I’m glad you withdrew on the issue of controlling the Force’, he cajoled; ‘So, we are better than them, because our practices allow us to wield the power to partially control matter and bend some simple laws of physics...and theirs simply teach them ethics and morals, and the fact that they shouldn’t try to know the mind of their creator?’ He enquired.

‘Yes’ I stated. Succinctly, I thought.

‘So tell me, young master, where our training differs from that idea?’ he challenged.

‘Well....of course the ethics are there....and we supplant ourselves, too’

‘Uh-huh....’master incurred, ‘continue’

‘But we supplant ourselves to the will of the Force...not this silly God-thing. We KNOW where it is the will comes from.’ I stated, matter-of-factly.

‘OK....so we supplant ourselves to the will of the Force....and how is this will determined?’ he challenged

flummoxed, I replied...‘It simply....is...it’s there...because the Force has a will’

And master smiled, ‘So....how do you know that the will of the Force isn’t actually the will of some divine being?’ He asked...I stood, mouth open, unable to answer his question. ‘You can’t!!!’ He said....

‘But you can *see* it....’ I replied. ‘There is no evidence for a God!! No hypothesis....no reasoning.....the Force, we can feel...but God?’ I enquired...almost begging.

‘Tell me what happens, lad, when higher ground and lower ground meet’ he asked.

‘Well master...there is...there is a cliff. Or a hill, or a slope, or a ramp...’ I replied, stunned. Where was this leading? What was the old man talking about now.....

‘So there is a slope....a medium, which reconciles the two?’ he questioned...

‘Y-...yes...’ I stammered

‘and so, in this case, higher and lower, are reconciled by something, which can relate equally to both of them....?’ He asked....he looked at me, observing my blank expression. He thought a little himself, and then came up with another example; ‘So...tell me about primitive circuitry’, he asked.

‘Master?’ I intoned...but the expression on his face suggested I do as he told

‘Master...the power source contains energy, which likes to flow down a gradient...from negative to positive. A circuit makes the gradient possible. Place something across this circuit, and it can use the energy generated by this downward flow to do work....’ I said...as an image flashed in my mind...

‘Good. So a medium is used to reconcile above and below. This medium relates to both parts of this....but to our mind, there is a definite direction, in which the exchange can flow...be it gravity, or a thermodynamic gradient?’ He asked...

‘Yes, master...and the same are true of the Force? We are the medium between it and the people?’ I enquired....master chuckled...

‘You really do believe that, don’t you, lad? You really do think we are better than these people?’ I stared at him blankly.....

‘That wasn’t your point?’ I asked

‘No.’ he said flatly ‘your lack of objectivity, and inflated sense of worth disturb me: they can only lead you in one direction....what I was getting at was this: the next line of the Holy Scripture?’ he enquired

‘The Lord is one. Superior. The Lord’s thoughts cannot be known, only observed, by their manifestation in the realm of worldly knowledge’ I replied....

‘OK....so the Lord has whatever will the lord will have...and it can only be observed indirectly.’ He said...I nodded, and so he continued ‘So, how then, do we observe the will of the lord?’ He asked....‘If not directly, then how?’

Now, I was getting the idea: ‘The *Lord*, then, is the upper part of this incline. *WE* collectively, are it’s lower end....and the medium, through which the Lord’s will becomes manifest, which relates to both of us.....is the Force.....’ I trailed off, in contemplation....of course, the implications of this made tracks in my mind. I followed those tracks:

‘so then, master: I was right!! We *can* observe the will of the Lord better than these people!!!’ I stated, matter-of-factly.

‘Not entirely, lad.’ Master said ‘But I admire your analytical attitude. We all have midichlorians...they strengthen our connection to the Force, and can sometimes allow us to understand it’s whim....but I certainly have never met someone, who would know the mind of the Force....they merely make our connection to it so great, that we can manipulate the surrounding atoms....and to experience the Force so close makes us humble enough to know that we are just an insignificant part of the whole...that we are nothing...and to try to improve...however, the will of the Force still takes effect on us. We can sometimes observe it in premonitions and prophecy, but we cannot control it. We are as subservient to it, and as powerless against it as the normal people are....they just

have even less conscious links to it, than we do. No Jedi is bigger than the Force, all are subservient to it, and all are governed by it's will.....and none indeed can tell you that it is not what unites us with whatever-it-is up there that is in charge...if we were that connected to the Force, that we could know such a fact, we would have transcended this crude matter long ago.....' he trailed off.....

I sat and listened to it all....as master lay down his view of the Force, and also, along with it, my hitherto superiority complex. But one issue still remained:

'Master: I can see the truth in your words. I retract my statements, and I apologize for my ignorance. I now see the error of my harsh judgment.....but still: those people out there rain bitterness upon us, with their jeers, with their filth, and with their religion. Surely they are not supplanted to the will of their Lord!!!'

'Indeed not, my boy' Master sighed 'If only they were. Their divine Lord is so unknowable, that I suppose it is far easier on them not to try to contemplate it's nature....their scriptures say nothing about technology being distracting: they speak more of one's relationship to one's Lord....the problem is with the people themselves: when they are working, they do not need to contemplate such things as their Lord, because they have to concentrate on the job at hand.....a funny thing indeed, the ego is. It is at once your best friend and worst enemy. It is protecting these people from the obvious displeasure, which such realizations as one's insignificance, and one's helplessness against the cosmic tide would engender. It is making their lives that much simpler and more bearable...but at the expense of greater knowledge. We need feel only pity for them. That is why they need such priests to guide them: the people who will do the work, and pierce the veil, are mature enough to direct their 'flock' in the correct manner....and subtle enough, too. I have every reason to believe their Papa is in seclusion: he is a wise man!! Do you think HE could stop those slaving animals from their course? If he did, they would find a way to usurp him...or someone would come along and promise them what they want, and a bloody war would ensue, resulting in the said party becoming firmly ensconced in the seat of power. No, this Papa is a wise man, indeed: he waits for their anger to subside....it has already reached its peak with our coming....we will meet him soon enough, and the anger of the people will only decrease from now on. And when they are quiet, he will remove himself from his seclusion, and gently bestow the good news upon the people.....yes, we are dealing with a true Jedi Master here.....Force or no.....agreed?'

I could only concur with my master's words.....and when, a few days later, again harried by missiles from the people, we went to meet with delegates from the Temple, and the Papa, (a man whose very presence radiated peace and calm) announced an end to his prayer, allowed us to enter his chambers, master's prediction came to pass. As the meetings between Government and priesthood began to happen, masters expertise at negotiating wasn't needed: the forward-thinking councilors were more than happy to accommodate the ideas of the priesthood. And the people became more and more acquiescent towards the negotiations, as they realized how much work they needed to do to get their farms running properly again after the days spent bickering, and how much they would appreciate the extra hours of rest their exhausted bodies could be treated to, if they were to employ machines in their daily work. Of course, some detractors always

remain, but the majority of the people was open to the new ideas...and thus, was progress made.

Sunrunner and Suntoucher

Roo Sunrunner sat quietly in the courtyard, the wind blowing fallen leaves around her body, lightly fingering the edges of her robes. There was no one else around right now, which was what she wanted. She needed some time to be alone.

They say that a Jedi's life was hard, and that one on that path would have to persevere. It seemed that Roo's lesson in that was slamming in full force. Already events around her were threatening to tear her heart apart. She didn't know what to do about it, and she was frightened that this would alter and maybe even wreck her Jedi training. Something dear to her was in danger of being torn away, and despite the fact that she knew that a Jedi's life was full of sacrifice, and other Jedi had told her that losing things wasn't always detrimental, she could not bare to lose what was vital to her valuable heart. She felt... *knew*, that she would be off balance forever.

"Such a sullen look on a face so young," a light voice said above her.

Surprised, the young padawan turned to find the face of Sah'ar Suntoucher looking at her, a hint of concern in his eyes. Unlike most of the others, he was dressed in his casual garb, his black Jedi robes only worn when he felt it needed to be. Roo didn't know much about him, only that he was somewhat reclusive, but friendly and earnest in his views of the Jedi path. She admired his philosophy.

"I know that Jedi are supposed to be serious, but come on," he said jokingly. "Even Baal laughs sometime."

She chuckled, but only slightly, for her inner sorrow could not keep mirth in her for long. "I'm sorry; it's just...well there is a lot that I am facing right now."

He sat down besides her. "Hopefully not alone?"

"Yes and no," she replied sadly. "Everyone deals with events in their own way."

"Well, if I may ask, what exactly are you facing?" the older Jedi asked gently.

Roo hesitated for a moment. Then looking up at him, she relented.

"Something that is very dear to me is in danger of being cut away, and I don't know what I can do about it. It's like someone is chipping away at my heart, piece by piece, and with each piece, my life, my balance, is striped away. I'm feeling like I'm drifting."

"If I lose what I hold dear in my heart, then I feel I will loose myself. I know that Jedi are supposed to be unattached but...." she let it rest there, dropping her head in sorrow.

Sah'ar closed his eyes and thought for a moment. The light sound of blown leaves scraping the ground where all that was heard.

"Roo, the chip from your heart that you do not want to lose, it's very important that it stay with you?"

Slowly, she nodded.

"And it will help you stay on the Jedi path?"

"Yes. Very much so," she said quietly.

Sah'ar chuckled. "Then you don't have anything to worry about."

She turned to him puzzled. "What do you mean?"

Sah'ar looked at her with a gentle smile. "If you treasure it so much, and if it is an integral part of you and your growth, then who or what could possibly take it away from you?"

She looked at him, eyes slowly widening. "But. But it's out of my hands! There's nothing I can do about it..."

Sah'ar chuckled and tapped her on the head in a gentle rebuke. "Always *with you it cannot be done*. To a Jedi, nothing is impossible. And if what you are after and hold onto is worthwhile, then nothing can take it from you if you are determined to keep it. You can flow with whatever comes your way, and still hold onto what is most important to you in the end.

"A sailor on a raft faces a storm, which threatens to tear her from her craft and cast her into the sea. There is nothing she can do about the storm, but submit to it, and face the waves. She and her craft are tossed to and fro, lightning flashes, winds howl. Things onboard are tossed this way and that, thrown into the sea. But at the end of the storm, because of her courage and skill, she still has what she needed the most. Her raft. All because she didn't want to let it go. And instead of fighting the storm. She rode along with it."

He tapped her on the nose. "And that's my lesson to you, little Sunrunner. Ride that storm; face the waves, but hold on to that raft you hold dear. And trust me, nothing will be able to take it away, save for your own surrender."

Sah'ar got up. "Well, I have to go. I have a lightsaber session to go through." He tilted his head. "You can come along if you want, might as well show you something."

Roo smiled slightly, thinking about what he said earlier. Maybe she *could* ride out this storm. Maybe she won't have to lose that chip after all.

"Sure."

And so Sah'ar walked away, in the sweeping motion of the fallen leaves, until the black robe was no longer in sight, and a fresh memory. His lesson, however, could not be swept away by any passing breeze. Rather, like the words of a god, it was spoken as a breath of life, and gently rode across the land, person to person, with each Jedi feeling the breeze and passing it along with the breath of life to the next in need

Nicholaas had heard the words from the near distance of where Roo and Sah'ar had been talking. The wind had blown leaves his way, swirling up and about high in the afternoon sun, and back down again, gliding to the earth for a rest. He stood next to a marble fountain, listening to the water flow about. It shot up from the fountain head in a constant, flowing stream, with all the droplets crashing about the pool. Those same droplets melted into the larger body of water, which was eventually cycled back through the fountain head, and back into the pool. It's a constant flow, life is.

"Roll with the punches," the leather-clad Nicholaas said to himself. He repeated it a few times, like a mantra, just letting the message sink in. This philosophy wasn't something alien to him, however from time to time he needed to be reminded of its potency and importance.

Life is made up many things, but most importantly, perhaps, what we hold dear. Sah'ar has spoken of holding on to what you cherish no matter what life throws at you, and if you are determined to keep it, nothing can take it away from you. Times change, people pass on, and storms will brew on the horizon. Hang on to what you love, and it will be with you on the other side of that storm. And that, I feel, is what's important - The storm **will** end, and when it does, it leaves something behind...

Strength to survive the next, and a deeper appreciation of what you have. As the old adage goes "You don't know what you have until it's gone..." There is relevance here, but by riding out these storms holding what you cherish close, one can come to realize just what that cherished thing means to you...

True Power

A Jedi Master sits in meditation in an old temple, two huge statues of old heroic Jedi standing on either side of the alter before him. All is quiet and tranquil. But then suddenly, the doors behind him are thrust open, and a tall man walks in, power radiating from him. The newcomer is an old student of the master. As he continues walking, he addresses him.

"Master, the Jedi Kanar has been defeated. The Sith Knight Shi crushed him as he would an insect."

He steps closer, in bold strides "When you named Kanar as your successor to your secrets, I told you that it should have been me, and I was right!" Raising a fist, he challenged his

master. "Stand up, I'll prove it to you, I challenge you to a test of strength!"

The Jedi Master opened his eyes and looked up. "Strength is nothing without perception. For perception is the key which unlocks the intangible power of the spirit. You perceive nothing."

The student chuckled with contempt. "Silly old fool, stop hiding behind your metaphors and metaphysical fantasies. The Jedi of the White Comet is dead!"

The Jedi Master didn't flinch. "Your point?"

"Don't you understand? Now *I'm* the Jedi of the White Comet!"

Walking in front of the Master, the student stretches out to the Force. Using his awesome powers, he charges himself up, and then lashes out at the statues before him with surging blasts of Force energy, blasting them to bits and pieces. The heads of the statues fly through the air towards him; with ease, he unhooks his lightsaber, and cuts them into smaller pieces of stone. Levitating those pieces in mid-air, he then crushes them with the Force. Overflowing with energy, his aura shines and flows around him.

"My powers are greater than ever before. No one can stand against me."

"Maybe," the Master admitted, "but power without perception is spiritually useless and therefore of no true value."

"Useless Master, what a foolish old man you are. Any tool is useful if you know how to use it. And I've become an expert. Watch!"

Casually pointing to the roof above him, he rips a hole in it, sunshine pouring in.

"Admit it! At this point, I'm more powerful than you ever were! I'm the Jedi of the White Comet!"

The Jedi Master shook his head. "I don't agree. And I never shall."

He stood up. "Go and do what you will Runor, but never set foot in this temple again."

Intentions and Consequences

THREE JEDI SIT IN THE GARDEN AND HAVE SHARE A POT OF STRAINED METHYSTICUM BEANS. DEEAN POURS TEA FROM THE CLAY POT INTO JEDI WHITE'S CUP.

Jedi White:

Master Kett, I understand you to mean that it's a good thing for us who exist in the realm

of the body to question somebody's intentions.

Deean:

Well, he he. We exist simultaneously in both body and spirit, but I get your meaning. Yes, intentions are very important to understand, both our own and others. Respect for the truth measures the quality of our souls, and our connection to the Force is measured by the quality of our relationships with other life forms. It is true that we all occasionally have bad intent, but it is patterns that Jedi look for. It is the PATTERN of bad intent that should alert you to be cautious, not the isolated event.

Jedi White:

But you also mentioned rewards and punishments, and that nihilists might be rewarded with nonexistence if they continue down their path.

Deean:

The problem with nihilism as a life philosophy is two fold. There are spiritual and physical consequences for those who choose to be mediocre.

Of course, I am guided by a deep abiding understanding that mystic traditions are truthful when they say, "As in heaven, so on the planet." Let us first look at the manifestations of nihilism here in the physical realm.

If you do nothing as a course of policy in your life, the day will arrive when you will have nothing but memories to look back upon. I have spoken to hundreds of elderly people in the course of my research here at the Academy and I can promise you, they review their memories because they know that they have no more future to imagine. They do it in their rocking chairs, and you will too.

What would you rather see in this life review? All of the adventures, stories, mentally wholesome activities, and books read, victories had, loves, passions, vacations, depressions, hopes and hopes dashed in a grand and tragic play?

Or would you rather remember the countless hours you spent on the couch doing nothing, thinking nothing, and believing in nothing, while the television buzzed in your head...living vicariously through sitcom characters, violent representations of humans, or plugged into the mind control devices of modern capitalism?

The latter is sort of Hell in life for the elderly. I have heard many a sorrow from career nihilists.

Now that is just one of the physical, planetary consequences. It is a punishment, but is it delivered by God's hand?

Before I proceed, let me lay down another a priori assumption. That is that most of our most popular Draconian mystical laws exist for our own benefit, not to please some sentient God as though we were little children in for a good beating.

No - punishments in the spirit world are always self-imposed, so that when I speak of punishment I ask you to ditch the image of a punitive deity. That is not what I mean.

I am talking about natural consequences, spiritual and bodily. When I was a boy my Master told me not to touch the exhaust manifold of a speeder bike. I didn't heed his warning and reaching out, held fast. There was a puff of smoke and a hissing sound. The resulting second degree burn taught me to listen to my Master without him having to lift a finger to "punish" me.

Since the spirit world follows the principle of action through non-action, it can only be that we doom ourselves with our own beliefs. Where else but right here, in the physical world, is this more clear? Does it need to be clearer? Yoda once said, thoughts make the world.

If there is a God who presides over what we see as the Force, surely His or Her or its punishments are surely of this variety.

Jedi White:

But Deean, in your opinion, do you think it's a good thing for those of us who live in the realm of the body to dish out those rewards and punishments?

Deean:

Personal disgrace is worse than bodily pain. Generally speaking, White, no, you needn't dish anything out. I mean, at its core the world works like this... you have the right to do whatever you want to do, I have the right to try to stop you. Multiply this times 7 billion on this planet alone, and you get a pretty good picture of the Force in action.

It flows very nicely with evolution and natural law. After a while homo-sapiens discovered that it is best to create little pacts and work together, this includes inhibiting certain wants and desires for better ones down the road. As a result, we won out over other species such as Neanderthal, who were supposed to be extremely solitary. Solitary or wantonly selfish life proved to be an inferior philosophy.

Of course there are those who say that they are living successful solitary lives now, but it doesn't count if you are flying a Corellian starship, and eating Naboo cuisine that you cooked in your Coruscant built microwave. At that point you are still a product of combined effort, but I diverge.

I think what you are asking is more of a day to day sort of thing. Of course the answer is more complex than any fast rule can bridle, but to the most part you must have faith that the universe is unfolding precisely as it should.

Give people enough rope and they will hang themselves. You come out smelling like a rose, and actually help them along their path by your non-action since the only way to personal truth is through one's own annihilation - through dwelling a long time in a state

of complete and total humiliation.

A good rule of thumb is to resist getting involved 9 out of 10 times that some crusade drops into your lap. What you will quickly find is that most problems solve themselves seamlessly but for our meddling. More people die of overeating than of starvation. Think about what this might mean to you.

Rodian legend tells us to wait long enough and the bodies of your enemies will sooner or later drift by in the river on their own. This is the "spirit of the law" that you want to impose upon yourself. By the way, never follow the "letter" of (self-imposed) laws. Leave yourselves wiggle room.

Of course the other side of this coin is for you to live right, stand tall, be honest, speak truth, and take responsibility for your actions - which is the definition of integrity. Once you embrace integrity you will automatically become more Jedi like because you will grow tired of cleaning up after yourselves.

So much mental health actually comes with age when we grow exhausted of behaving like a psycho.

Also, this brings another thought to mind. Don't try to solve other people's problems with your mouth. This includes talking, gossiping, telling people what to do, making promises that you don't keep, etceteras. Words are thunder, actions are lightning. Tell me which blows the tree from the ground?

Solve problems with your body. Do things, make arrangements, give telephone numbers, be active. This is using the Force in your life. Talk is lazy and cheap. Live right, and lead by example.

You will quickly discover that many people around you are in a downward spiral of self-punishment

as they say; living well is the best revenge. I have found this true again and again and again. Do not seek to be known. Seek to be worth knowing. It takes longer but the rewards are profound.

Then, when that rare occasion arrives that it is appropriate to get involved you will have full mental and physical resources to apply to the task. Nobody will say, "Oh it's just that boy who cried Wampa."

Jedi White:

In other words, should we place a value judgment on somebody's intent and then, if we judge them to be at fault, flame the heck out of them until they go away?

Deean:

Well, anger is only one letter short of danger. Peace comes not from the elimination of

disturbances. It comes from properly handling disturbances. There is a big problem with electronic forums that I can see, and I am as guilty as the next guy for contributing to it. You see, in real conversation there is talking and there is metacommunication. Sometimes as much as 50 percent of intent is communicated with body language. Since that is missing it is very easy to get your feelings hurt and then respond hurtfully. In the past this alone has frustrated me enough to no longer want to bother posting here.

Jedi White:

I'm a little unclear as to the intent of your words (yes, I know you like it that way!), and I figured I'd earn some Brownie Points of Worthiness by questioning them.

Deean:

I know that you are kidding, and I hope that you know that I am kidding when I say that your quest for "Points of Worthiness" is a matter between you and your father, not you and me.

Jedi Aicerno:

Deean, within all the fundamentals, you and I are in agreement. However, I find it to be somewhat useful to let one's actions show the intent of their heart. While not as direct as outright asking what one's intent is; sometimes the more subtle means has its benefits.

And as I've often seen you say in past posts, sometimes it is better to wait and get a feel for things. That does not negate the need for action when it is needed; but both directness and subtlety have their disadvantages. And in that, they also have their advantages too, is this not true of all things?

Deean:

Of course! The matter is as complicated as you say. Everyone wants a simple answer. Sometimes it is just fun to give in a come up with one. As a rule of thumb though, we are far too meddling a society I think. It hurts each of us. We should place more faith in Medicatrix Naturae, the "healing power of nature."

Years ago I was given a government job on Coruscant where I offered technical assistance to the Chancellor. Now, between myself and Vallorum was a secretary who was building his career on making Vallorum happy. So that when Vallorum saw a new computer hologaming center and mentioned in passing, "that is neat," this translated within hours into "Chancellor Vallorum has requested a computer hologaming center on his staff ship!"

I used to hop on every request that came to our shop until I became ill with the space crud and was out of work for one week. I came back to discover an interesting new phrase: "OVERCOME BY EVENTS" OR O.B.E.

Jedi Aicerno, most things are overcome by events. We must all develop the wisdom to know which things are of this nature and which are not.

Jedi Aicerno:

Well said, Master Deean, but as for the shadows, you see them as nihilism. I see them as having the potential to bring either good fortune or mass ruin. It depends entirely on the content of the character in question, this should, I feel, apply equally to any person regardless of their ideological beliefs and values.

Deean:

Yes of course. I am guilty of some hypocrisy here because I am choosing the semantics that I prefer to address a topic that has a wide range of meaning to different people. In advance I am sorry if I step on anyone's toe here.

What I am getting at, to be clear, when I say that this shadow business is a form of nihilism is that for two years at this site I have heard the phrase thrown around, usually attached to a kind of self-righteousness. In other words, we hear, "unlike you light Jedi, we shadow Jedi are integrated in evil and good."

Unfortunately, this position leads people to be able to justify all kinds of behavior, I think... If you want to steal, why then you are surely just exercising the integration of good and evil. If you want to ruin your brain with drugs, why it is just your "dark" side integrating with your "light." Perhaps I am generalizing but I saw this happen in the occult circles in which I once ran.

Far be it from me to tell people what they can call themselves, but as I posted in the other thread, there is no such thing as a Light Jedi, so it is all a mute point. The Graysiders are either eating stone soup, or they are leaving a clause in their moral system to explain away behavior that they know is not really good for them.

In truth, the "balanced life" is one that fails to give you what you claim to want about as often as it fails to give you what you actually deserve.

The idea of cognitive dissonance has been well documented. We change our beliefs to match our behaviors. Beliefs are more easily altered and this gives birth to the fence sitting Jedi. There is a difference between being centered, and cultivating moral indecision. My apologies to you if you are one of the few who understand the difference. But why the need for the special name?

You would think I would have grown tired of asking such a dumb question. He he he.

Jedi Aicerno:

Deean, you said that the purpose of the life school is to see if you "get it." Actually, we disagree on this one. Or perhaps on further inspection we do agree, it is just that we use different terms.

I always thought that the true purpose of the life school was to cull the weak, and to test all species to see if they can make it. This challenge cannot be done without a balance of the Id or the selfish aspects of the human personality . . . however, within the balance;

humans are also required to be "team" players. That is, in order to survive at all, they need to act as part of a coherent group. At least so far as I am concerned, it is this balance that gives the necessary strength to live within the shadows.

Deean:

Once again, we come full circle. I agree with you. When I speak of the spirit world I only speak with the authority that comes with the belief of the spirit world as a mirror of this one.

In this world, the spoils and treasures go to those who fall again and again, but get up and say, I HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING ABOUT MYSELF AND MY WORLD! Think of it as a psychological and spiritual correlate to Darwin's harsher natural selection.

Those who bemoan fate wake each Yule to find nothing in their stockings. Worse, they are cursed to always find nothing their stockings because they refuse to fix the hole that causes the gifts to fall into the fireplace.

...and when a healer, teacher, or spirit guide comes along in the form of a friend, Jedi, or homeless schizophrenic they ignore them. The teacher says, "Hey, did you know that there is a hole in your stocking?" and the person replies, "yeah, but there is nothing in here again!" To which the teacher says, "But there is a hole in the bottom, and all of your life gifts are falling out!" Again comes the reply, "yeah, but there is nothing in here again!"

And so it goes until the teacher becomes tired and wanders off.

It may take many teachers until they listen. Often they go to the grave wondering why there is nothing in the stocking. It is very sad. I'm telling you people, I saw this all the time in my work as a Counselor to the Senate. It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness, but many people go right on cursing - behavior which has some of the hallmarks of evil. Pride, laziness, and deception.

Pride - they would rather be right than happy

Laziness - they do not want to do the work to change their world view since they have already decided that the world is cruel.

Deception - they deceive themselves by over generalizing. For example, a bad thing happens and they say, "Bad things ALWAYS happen," even though someone may have given them a parking spot that morning...they conveniently forget that detail.

And so, once again, evil shows its face, and the punishment is a natural consequence. No God needed.

Jedi Aicerno:

Deean, you said that "Those who elevate pride, laziness, and deception to the status of gods will have a rough time. Their reward may even be dissolution." And here we agree.

Chuckling A little pride and a little humility never hurt, but in letting them take over

one loses the strength they need in order to function. Laziness is the bane of existence, but with deceit; what is the good or bad from that? To deceive one in the name of "doing something 'good'" should be as morally reprehensible as deceiving someone or some group in the name of doing something 'bad' as seen within the context of any given culture.

Deean:

Well, first of all, no person is a villain in their own eyes. I see where you are going here but there is a caveat to the pride, laziness, and deception litmus test for evil. When these three elements are present in total or in combination with personal or selfish gain, then you can be sure that evil is present. Guilt follows when we hurt someone else, but regret follows when we hurt ourselves, and regret is far more painful. Once again, natural consequences, which is why the Sith are such a miserable bunch of S.O.B.s

Let me try to give an example how complex this matter is. When someone lies to honestly protect another, it is not evil. Nor is it evil to keep secrets if you were a victim of some wrongdoing like molestation. However, if your perpetrator has access to other children and you do nothing as an adult, then your secret becomes self-serving at the potential cost of another whom you could have rescued from the same fate.

Of course you may have your reasons for not telling, but your silence is damning. Once again, two sins, omission and commission. On the other hand, lying to avoid personal disgrace for something that you should not have done is self-serving as well.

People are looking for cookie cutter answers to moral dilemmas. We must strive to develop moral roots as Jedi, which is another reason to me that all of this shadow stuff sounds like a cop out.

Jedi Aicerno:

But Deean, I think that you should either apply the standard evenly, or do not apply it at all. Otherwise, that is hypocrisy, which is a much worse crime in my thoughts than deceit.

Deean:

I see what you are saying and to some degree I agree with you. But moral decisions require moral backbone, because you have to be able to respond to contingencies that are thrown your way that were not in your play book.

Chances are, if you have an opinion that everyone disagrees with, you are probably morally in the right, these days. I say this somewhat tongue in cheek, but you get what I am saying. All of us will have to face the choice someday between having friends or having ourselves. It is that simple. What a cost to have friends... and how many would pay the price?

I used to know a beautiful space merchant who told me that when going out on a date with a guy she always decided ahead of time "how far" it could go. That way, she knew that she was not making decisions about where she stood in the thick of things, when she

knew darn well that her mental abilities would be compromised.

This is like the standard.... Earlier I said, the letter of the law.

I can think of a dozen other examples where the spirit of the law is better, usually in situations that are more complex, but I think we agree.

FINISHING THEIR CONVERSATION THE THREE JEDI RISE FROM THEIR SEATS AND MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE CAFETERIA WHERE A DELICIOUS MEAL IS BEING SERVED.

White nods to Dregyn, always glad to see him at the Academy. White notices that Dregyn absorbs a lot from the other Jedi, but doesn't always interject his opinion. White predicts that Dregyn will become very wise.

Upon entering the cafeteria, Aicerno, Deean, and White find a table and join some other Jedi to eat their lunch. White looks sad, and says to Deean, "Thank you for your response. Your words show sincerity and your writing shows a lot of skill. I found many truths in what you had to say. You answered my questions and you made Aicerno's point of view clear to me even while you contrasted it with your own.

For the record, I was not promoting -- maybe preaching is the better word -- the idea that some omnipotent god should inflict rewards and punishment, and that we who dwell in the realm of the body should not, or, on the other hand, that we should play god. I was just curious to see what you meant by spiritual rewards and punishments. But I know that you mentioned the omnipotent god perspective because you were taking into account my personal spiritual beliefs.

One thing that you said hit me hard, mainly because it was you who said it, and because the future is bright for you in your capacity as a healer. You said, 'What would you rather see in this life review? All of the adventures, stories, mentally wholesome activities, and books read, victories had, loves, passions, vacations, depressions, hopes and hopes dashed in a grand and tragic play? Or would you rather remember the countless hours you spent on the couch doing nothing, thinking nothing, and believing in nothing, while the television buzzed in your head...living vicariously through sitcom characters, violent representations of humans, or plugged into the mind control devices of modern capitalism?'

This hit me hard because it occurred to me that the description that you wrote is reality for many people who suffer from depression. I know you didn't mean anything macabre, but it sounds like depressed people have nothing to live for. There are effective treatments for depression, but none that work for everybody, and there is no cure. It seems like depressed people are receiving punishment for a worldview that they can't just change at will (if only it were that easy!). I don't mean that some omnipotent god is zapping them with the blues to fulfill some sadistic desire just that sometimes hopelessness and the belief that the world is out to get us won't go away when we change

our cognitions. Although I agree with you that we should try to change them if we are ever in this situation...

So I don't have a complaint or an argument about what you said, just an observation that you seem to have stumbled across an unpleasant similarity between nihilism and depression."

White turned to Aicerno. "Thank you, too, for your input. I appreciated hearing your perspective on the shadow area of life."

White was still disturbed, so she excused herself and took her lunch up to her cell. Maybe she was worried about Deean's sudden interest in her father. Maybe she was just tired from insomnia.

The Tale of Kyp Durren

Kyp Durren, as most of you know, is a character out of the *Star Wars* Expanded Universe, created by a man by the name of Kevin J. Anderson. The story was written to make a series of books more exciting, but hidden in this story, possibly by pure accident, is an excellent lesson for all Jedi. It is not know if the tale was meant to contain such meaning or not, but that makes its lesson no less valid.

Kyp grew up in the hostile spice mines of Kessel. He had been placed in the prison at age eight by the Imperials. This way of life made him a very angry and hostile youth by the age of sixteen, when he escaped from the prison mines. After learning of his massive potential to use the Force, he went into training to become a Jedi Knight, under the guidance of Master Jedi Luke Skywalker.

Kyp was the fastest learner and most powerful of all of Master Skywalker's students at the time. His power grew in exponents' everyday, as did his control over that power. Master Skywalker allowed this because Kyp came in late in the training curriculum, but after time, the Master Jedi slowed his student's progression, making him less of a pillar of envy amongst the other students. While he meant well, his timing was off...Kyp had already learned his inner strength, and did not wish to wait for his Master's timetable. Kyp found access to the twisted knowledge of the Sith. The unstable Jedi student stopped listening to Master Skywalker, and began to learn the dark ways of a greatly powerful, yet truly twisted sect of students of the Force.

Kyp fell to his dark desires, and lost sight of the greater good. He obtained a weapon of massive power, and used it to kill billions of people, one of which being his own brother. That just drove him further and further into the darkness. He also attacked the Jedi that was his master, nearly killing him with the twisted Sith teachings Kyp had taken it upon himself to learn. After being confronted by a close friend, Kyp saw the great error in his ways, but by then, it was too late. No amount of apologizing would ever wash the blood from his hands.

Instead, he rededicated himself to the Jedi training, making it a point to learn the ways of the Jedi, not just the ways of the Force.

The lesson found in this is one of patience and humility. Do not lust for power, because in the end, it is of no use without knowing how to use it. I know the pace of learning here is slow...it is meant to be. To grow in the Force too fast is not to grow as a Jedi. It is to fall from the Jedi, and become lost in your own power. I sense good things from all of you, because if I did not, you would not be reading this now....and I do not wish to see any of you go through horrors I have in the darkness. So, stay diligent, practice, and take in what it means to be Jedi, not just a Force user.

Order 66

After nearly three days in hyperspace, Jundal had arrived at his destination. A small planet named Mercury orbiting a sun named Sol. There were a variety of environments from that of the rainforest to the desert, from all spectrums of the scale. Spiraling down from orbit, he passed through air traffic control quickly and landed a few miles away from his target.

"Saraphan. I will be gone for some time. Several hours at least, several days if I find what I wish to find. I will return soon. Should you be attacked, then perform a fly by at my target, and pick me and the object up. Do you understand?"

"Understood Jedi Desh."

For once, Jundal did not mind being called the name he disliked. He needed reminding who he was, for now. Setting out, he trotted for a while. Walking for a hundred meters and then jogging for a hundred, his loping pace ate up ground in the manner of his warring ancestors. No few hours later, he was two hundred meters away from where he needed to be. It was a small squat building in a long L shape, a low red tiled roof covering it with the whitewashed walls standing out against the night. For some time Jundal sat and watched to see if there was any activity in the building, but seeing nothing, moved slowly toward the door. It was a large red door banded with metal on three levels, designed to give the impression that it was impregnable. Slipping the lock with the force, Jundal crept in, and watched as his target shifted comfortably in the chair he was watching the vid-screen on. Advancing a slowly, he could see nothing but the target and the light cast by the vid-screen, the darkness in the room all pervasive. As he advanced, he felt a movement behind him. Seizing it with the force, he didn't move. Suddenly two of the ornaments off the mantle-piece jumped from their places and sped toward him. Seizing them, he stood up straight, feeling as much as hearing the object behind him hum into life as a green blade he knew all too well sprung into life from the hilt of the lightsaber. Without moving, the being in the chair spoke.

"Hello Jedi Desh. You have improved, I see. Had I tried that when you passed the trials, you would be dead now."

“True, but I passed the trials more than two years ago. You have to try harder than that to best me now, as well you know. I hope you have kept up your training, as I have. Because if you haven’t then I will kill you, my old master.”

Surging forward, Jundal’s strike cleaved the back of the chair in two, as the older man shot off the chair, and, extending his arm felt the lightsaber hit his palm and activate. Both men stood there, one with lightsaber humming, the other without.

“I could kill you now, knowing of you what I do Jundal.”

“Then please do. If you dare.”

A cold gleam stood on Jundal’s eye for a moment, and battle was joined. The older man struck downward, and Jundal twisted his torso out of the way, striking at the older man’s wrist with an oblique strike, this being deflected by the old man’s twist of his wrist. Coming, up, the older man struck out with his elbow toward Jundal’s face, but Jundal stopped this with the force, and struck back with the force. Seeing the man shaken, he pressed forward, only to be met with a boot to the face and as he fell backward, he thrust his hand forward and took the other man off his feet.

As he hit the wall behind him, Jundal’s enemy looked at him.

“You have improved, my friend. Do you wish to continue?”

Without speaking, Jundal thumbed his lightsaber on, and started to strike toward his enemy. Bringing his lightsaber up, the older man shuddered through his entire body as the sabers screamed as contact was made. Several passes later, Jundal was clearly in control of the fight.

“Do you wish to stop now?” Jundal asked.

“Well, seeing as I cannot win, my young padawan learner, I think that might be a good idea...”

Both men laughed, and embraced.

“What have you been doing for the last two and a half years, boy? Last time I saw you was just before you took the trials. I examined you myself, and I had no idea you had this kind of power. What happened?”

“Mellor, things happen to a man over time. Even if that man is a Jedi. I have seen pain and defeat, glory and victory. But the most painful thing I saw was to nearly lose someone I loved to their own mind. And I will not sit through that again. It nearly broke me, and it will not be borne!”

The force burst forth from Jundal and washed over Mellor. Sitting back slightly, Mellor

composed his thoughts.

“I understand my friend. But enough of the past. Why are you here? You have not visited me since you became a Jedi Knight. What brings you here now? I have nothing more to teach you, and you must master the force on your own, as many of us have tried before you. I sense an uneasiness within you. What causes it?”

“Mellor, have you heard of this order sixty six?”

“No my son I have not. What is it?”

“It is what the supreme chancellor Palpatine has ordered, making the clone troopers begin to hunt the Jedi. All of us. I had several dreams and had to warn you in person. I don’t know why, but I felt the need to.”

“The force is mysterious. Heed its ways, but do not puzzle overlong on its methods.”

Suddenly both men laughed.

“You sound like you used to!” Said Jundal.

“I know I do. But what of this order sixty-six then? I am not an active Jedi, I have retired in order to contemplate the force as many of us do. How would he know of me?”

“I do not know my friend. But I worry. And I urge you to keep your lightsaber at the ready. Because I will, and you know it.”

“Yes my friend I daresay you will. But then if I recall correctly, you slept with your lightsaber under your pillow for a while. Why was it you stopped doing that?” Mellor stopped talking to grin slightly at the younger mans look of acute embarrassment.

“Because it was cutting into my ear, and you know it old man!” Jundal struggled to keep the look of indignation on his face, but failed as he broke into a grin that stretched the corners of his mouth.

Mellor pulled Jundal into a hug and told him to sit down at the second chair in front of the roaring fire. As they sat, Jundal surveyed the room without thinking. The open fire was a large one, decked with large wooden beams on all sides, and a good deep distance behind it to capture and hold the heat. Above the mantle were a few new trophies that Jundal had never seen before. A caribou head, a few other creatures he couldn’t name and a Wampa.

“New trophies Mellor? I thought that you had stopped hunting in your old age?”

“Old age boy? I’ve seen in my years more than you ever will, if you’re lucky. But those were all taken in fair sport without the use of the force, and with old age weapons. The

bow you see over there took care of the caribou, and you see my boots?” Mellor held a foot out and pointed down. “They came from that big fella. He tasted nice too. I still have a bit of the stew I made from him if you like.” Mellor got up and started to move to the other side of the lodge, until a knock came at the door. Veering off to one side, Mellor opened the door to be confronted by two men Jundal couldn’t see.

“Who are you?” Mellor asked, pointing his question to the two men in the doorway.

“We are here to implement Order Sixty Six, a Jedi protection program. The supreme chancellor Palpatine is concerned that the growing wave of Anti-Jedi sentiment sweeping the galactic republic is dangerous and we are here to escort you to the temple on Coruscant.”

Before the man on the other side of the door had finished speaking, Jundal was behind his teacher. He looked at the clone troopers’ helmet, and saw nothing but his own death and that of his teachers along with thousands of other Jedi reflected in that featureless faceplate. He also knew the face under there. He had met the original, and that man had been one of very few non-Jedi to have ever scared him.

“You are here to protect us?” Jundal was suddenly acutely aware of exactly where his lightsaber was positioned, and how quickly he could get to it. He let out a seemingly real sigh of relief. “I’ve been so worried. My master here is an old man, and needs escorting to the temple. Could I set up a rendezvous with you and meet there with several other Jedi I know?”

The clone put his hand up to his helmet and spoke to someone through the receiver in his helmet. As he did this, both Jedi felt uncertainty and confusion from the clone. He looked up.

“That would be acceptable.”

“How many of you are there?”

“There are sixteen of us. We will be enough to protect you.”

As soon as he had stopped speaking, Jundal summoned the force. Twisting the energies with his mind, he lashed out, and the burst of power hit one trooper in the chest, caving his breastplate in with a crunch and freeing threads of blood that described a dark red trail as he arced toward the ground, his body a crumpled ruin. The second trooper had freed his weapon and taken aim with his weapon, the blaster bolt rebounding off Mellor’s weapon into his faceplate as Jundal’s blade swept across the troopers waist as he arced backward from the blast, separating the torso from the legs and both hit the floor simultaneously.

Turning to his teacher, Jundal caught his eye quickly.

“You should be honored. Sixteen clone troopers? They must think you more dangerous than you really are.”

Mellor rolled his eyes. “They try to take us and still you jest. You have indeed changed young man. Your jokes are as they were before, but now they have an edge. Perhaps this is a good thing. I’ll get a few things. Is your ship far?”

“Too far, I think.” Jundal spoke into his communicator. “They are jamming all signals in this area. We will have to make it without extraction. Do you have transport?”

“I’ve never needed it. Here, I get the public transport that comes to get me once a week for my supplies. I don’t need much, so the local transport service don’t mind coming out of their way for me. I’ll be back in a moment.”

Mellor disappeared into the only other room the lodge had and reappeared a minute or so later.

“Three years, and you bring a small shoulder bag?”

“Travel light travel fast.”

Both men grinned.

“But we have a problem. The Prophet is at least three miles away from here, and we have fourteen clone troopers between it and us, with who knows what weapons. If they have explosive and area effect weapons we may be in for an interesting time.”

The older man grinned at the thought of the danger. Mellor was that kind of person. As a member of the Jedi order, he had been a warrior of the first order, and from the look of him, he had stepped up his studies into the way of the warrior Jedi at least threefold since last they had met. Both men stepped out of the lodge, Jundal stepping quickly on light swift feet to the right, his mentor to the left. Both stood sensing the night, and noting nothing they moved quickly, several meters apart to avoid being taken out by the same blast from a grenade type weapon. As they reached the tree line, they both felt the movement in the force as something screamed through the air toward them. Both turned and bounced blaster bolts away from them, retreating into the trees, they both cut several trunks as they passed, and hoisting the millennia old trees they threw them toward the troopers with a grunt of effort. Guiding them slightly, they missed the troopers, but disoriented them enough to get a slight head start. Turning, both men broke into a sprint for half a mile, and then slowed to a trot.

“Is there anything you can think of to throw them off the trail? I don’t think we have got enough of a lead on them to start playing with trails, false trails and animal sign. We just have to run and hope. How many were there do you think?” Jundal asked.

“I’m not sure. How many did you sense? I think there was between two and six.” The

older man looked slightly concerned, his brows drawing together slightly.

"I sensed four. But the thing is with the clones, they all feel the same which means they are difficult to distinguish from each other. I think it would be easier to assume I have guessed right. There may be another ten in front of us. And we only have a couple of minute's head start on the ones behind us. So, when we get to the Prophet, we'd better hope its not guarded, or if it is, we can get through them some how. If we can't..."

"Let's just hope."

Creeping through the Trees, both men where crouched low, with their lightsabers switched off. There was a slight crackle as Jundal tried to call Saraphan on his commlink.

"Come in Saraphan, this is Jundal. Come in."

"Who's Saraphan? Don't tell me you brought a woman with you..." Mellor had been almost famous for his disapproval of Jedi having relationships. And right now, Jundal didn't want an argument when fourteen clones where pursuing them toward their only way off this forsaken rock.

"No, i happen to be the proud owner of a very large sleek black ship a little way away, and Saraphan is the name of the A.I. onboard. And it also happens to be somewhat... strange. So, don't be surprised when we get there."

Behind them, they started hearing sounds of the approaching clone troopers. Tapping Mellor on the shoulder, Jundal made a hand signal for them to move forward quietly at best speed, and they both started forward. Having spent so long together, each man knew the others mind like no other, and knew how he moved. Mellor raised his lightsaber, and flicked it on as a red bolt came from the left of them. Bouncing the bolt away, Mellor deactivated his weapon.

"They must have heat sensitive monitoring equipment. How do you want to play this? Lower body temperatures and creep in under their sensors?"

"No, if we do that, we will be too slow, and there is too much chance of being stumbled upon by the clones. Plus, those behind us now know where we are due to your lightsaber being rather shiny and bright..."

Mellor chuckled. "Well, i prefer a good fight to all of this running and hiding."

"You're meant to be a Jedi, not a swashbuckling pirate, you old fool."

Both men grinned. Moving forward at an increased pace, they came upon the clearing that Jundal had left the White Prophet. The black matt paint seemed to absorb all the light, and the stark white armor of the clone troopers stood out against both the ship and the night. There were ten troopers in the clearing, facing off at different directions. Jundal

knew from having watched them work that they would spin around quickly and bring their weapons to bear as soon as the first weapon was discharged.

Stepping forward, Mellor stood on a twig. The crack echoed throughout the clearing, and it might have been a starters pistol going off for the effect it had on the clones. The two Jedi looked at each other.

"Aww crap." They said in unison. Both brought their weapons up, thumbing the switches on. Both started moving inhumanly fast, filled with the force as they worked their lightsabers back and forth bouncing blaster bolts back where they came from. This team of clones was an experienced one however, moving to one side or the other after they had let off each shot, making it difficult to direct the bolts back. Jundal was coming to the conclusion that they would be here for an hour or two until the clones ran out of power packs. Leaning over, Mellor began to speak.

"I'll take these. Go take the ones behind us, and then re-join me."

Nodding, Jundal turned and sprinted away from the Prophet, toward where the clones were. Stretching out with the force, he got a bead on where they were, and ran past them in an elliptical arc to come on the from behind. Slowly coming behind the carefully moving clones, Jundal could hear the quiet chatter of the commlinks in their helmets, and see them nod to each other. These were an unusually talkative bunch for clones, their taciturn nature was pushed to one side. There were four of them there walking in a loose diamond formation, relaxed but alert. Jundal ran forward, and struck like lightning, his lightsaber cutting effortlessly through the first of four troopers. The second fell just as quickly after being slashed obliquely through his torso, and the third got a blaster bolt in the face as the fourth tried to shoot him. Dropping his weapon, the fourth pulled vibroblade, and thrust toward Jundals face. Deactivating his lightsaber, he clutched the clones wrist, twisting hard with one hand as he shot his other hand out on to the joint of the armor. The elbow crunched and the clone grunted as the armor shattered and sent pieces of the armor into his elbow joint as it broke with a crunch. The clone tried to hook punch with his other arm, but Jundal palmed that off and spinning the clone around, broke his neck with a wet crunch.

At the White Prophet, Mellor was tiring quickly. The massed fire from the clone troopers was taxing the energy it took to maintain his connection with the force to predict the blaster bolts. His wrists were burning, and he was starting to regret sending Jundal back to deal with the four clones. A couple of bolts had come close now, and he could know the swear dripping into his eyes and blurring his vision was dangerous. As he started to slow to the point of no return, barely keeping up with the clones, Jundal stepped in. He began walking forward, pushing the clones back slightly, until he saw a grey streak go past him as Mellor ran forward. Mellor cut to the right, meeting a clone head on, and cutting him down quickly. He went through three more, and turned to look for his next target when a bolt reflected from Jundals lightsaber bounced off the hull of the White prophet caught him in the shoulder.

Mellor spun around and hit the floor with a dull thud, moaning slightly as he instinctively used the force to quench the pain shooting through his chest. There was nothing he could do as three clones ran over, and leveling their blaster rifles and pumping round after round into his chest. The expression of surprise and horror didn't fade from his chest as the curls of smoke ceased to rise over his corpse. Seeing what had just happened, Jundals grief almost crippled him. He had just effectively killed his own teacher. The person he admire most in the universe had died by his hand. He looked at the six clones, he felt nothing but contempt and hatred. Lightsaber grasped in one hand, he effortlessly deflected the blaster bolts as he held up his other hand and blue lightning raked through three of the clones, killing them quickly. Seizing the weapons of the last three, he pulled them out of their hands, and reversed them, pointing them towards their faces.

"Any last words?"

None of the clones said anything.

"Good."

With a single crystal clear flash, the three clones dropped to the ground with smoking holes in their helmets, and shocked expressions on what was left of their faces.

Without speaking, Saraphan lifted the White Prophet into orbit. Below him, Jundal left his mentor, and a lot of corpses. He had taken Mellor's lightsaber, but buried the rest of his belongings with him.

"Where to, Jedi Desh?" Saraphan asked.

"To the Forsaken. That is where we need to be, for now."

As Saraphan prepared to lift off, Jundal was thinking of what he had left behind. A buried Jedi master who's grave was marked with one thing. A stick poked into the ground, and a clones helmet placed on top of the stick at the head of a mound of earth. A fitting tribute to a warrior.

The Academy: destroyed

Deean Kett woke with a start after yet another fitful dream.

The alarms peeled horns and bells at all decks as the huge ship tore into the sky.

Leaving without warning was, perhaps, prudent action for the Forsaken's captain. But as Deen peered out his porthole at the vanishing scene beneath them, all below the exiting ship was now a smoking chaos.

The plume of smoke roiled out, revealing the decimated domes of the old Academy... the

towers now mere empty hulks.

Deean Kett ran along the corridors, knowing the ship would be the next logical target...

"Damn them, we're sitting like sleeping Bantha on the open plain... Jil-Qun better get this..."

Deean's rant was cut short by a massive lurch from the thrusters. They we're moving... and violently... perhaps they were under attack and were maneuvering to keep out of range? Recovering his balance, he made his way towards the lift... up to the bridge, to meet his fate with a panoramic view.

The lift was oddly smooth, Deean expected to be buffeted by impacts explosions and the like... but so far, his luck was apparently still with him.

He arrived on the bridge with his skin still intact and marched up the circle of command. Jil-Qun sat with a scowl on his face, as always. Deean took up a position at a display panel.

"What's the damage so far? Do we have a range on their firing positions?" Deean said switching the holoviewer from sector to sector.

Nothing but the burning remains of the Academy showed on the screens.

"There is no enemy fire, old friend" Jil-Qun sighed.

"But..." Deean walked to the command chair.

"... who leveled the Acade-m..."

Deean paused, feeling something in his midichlorians... then at last, he sensed Jil-Qun's brooding for what it really was... grief.

The old Jedi had done the dirty work of the Separatists for them. The Academy was rubble now, and it was at the old man's hand too. No point in reminding the old goat of it either...

... Jil-Qun knew very well what he had done.

"So it has come to an end, then."

The two men turned to find Fiona standing at the door. Her usually sparkled brown eyes were red and watery, and she was frowning, trying to fight back the sadness.

It's not Jil-Qun's fault, She reminded herself, staring out the window behind them, unable to make eye contact. Breathing a little deeper, the young Jedi tried to keep from

dissolving into tears. *We would have to go sooner or later, and you know it.*

"What's the plan, Sir?" Fiona wiped her eyes again, her voice still shaking. "This is our story. Let's face our fate together."

The old Jedi regarded the young Jedi standing before him with a most stern gaze. No jokes, not this time. He weighed his response... not wasting a word. He stood in the center of his command area, widening his stance as the engines bore "The Forsaken" higher into the morning skies.

"We run" he said flatly.

"We run and run till we find... somewhere to be who we are".

The old one had said the last part to Fiona with his eyes focused on a point somewhere beyond the bow of the rising ship. He turned to face her now, perhaps sensing her pain growing.

"We will find a way through all this... and we will help whomever we can along the way" he said with more spirit, more confidence "We will make a useful life for ourselves... however we must".

Fiona smiled thinly, it was all she could manage...

... but it was a start.

Away from the Academy

Julene pushed herself away from the cockpit, and strode into the living quarters, where she ran head on into Exevan staring at the holo-unit.

"The Academy," Jules croaked out when she saw the images on the unit of the burned out shell of the school and the surrounding areas.

"While it is believed that the Jedi and their students escaped on a cruiser, little is known on the whereabouts of the criminal Jil-Qun Tahm or his band of rebel Jedi. As to the death toll, we are awaiting updates. This Academy has also been linked to two bounty hunters, ones Julene Tail, and Deadeye Exevan, wanted for the murders on the Runian system capital Tieron, a death toll in itself reaching over 1,000-" Ex turned it off, and sat down heavily in a chair.

"I can't believe it...we...we would have sensed something, wouldn't we have? Do you think they're okay?" Jules finally asked, and Ex looked up at her, nodding and trying to look encouraging.

"I think everyone's fine."

"I just can't believe it's gone."

Ex nodded, and stood up, walking his way into the kitchen.

"I just wish them luck, wherever they are."

Jundal sat in his cabin in the White Prophet.

"It's gone" Saraphans voice came over the speaker quietly.

"What is?" Asked Jundal.

"The Academy. Jil'Qun has destroyed it." Saraphan sounded shocked.

"It was his Academy, my friend. He was its governor, its protector and its champion for many years. He would rather have seen it destroyed by his own hand that pillaged and defaced by the separatist forces. I feel for him Saraphan. Now we're all homeless." As he spoke, Jundals voice got smaller and smaller, until it was barely a whisper.

Standing up, he looked about for something to do.

"Either way my friend I will miss the old place. I had many a good time there. From debates to training and back again. I had a lot of friends from there, and now its gone. But there will be something for us. We have the forsaken, now."

The Last Days of the Jedi Academy

Deean entered bridge of the new starship, the door sealing rapidly behind him. It was very late, and the broad glass panes of the windscreen reflected his fear, like obsidian mirrors in the dark Chandrilian night.

"Where the hell is everyone?"

To the left of the entryway, a tired technician snapped to attention with a screwdriver in his palm. "I've adjusted it as you requested, Master Jedi. The door should work just fine."

"How's the seal?" Deean asked, embarrassed that someone was actually there to hear his lack of discretion.

"The door seal is airtight, sir," replied the young man in Republic fatigues as he stifled a yawn. "Just as you requested."

"Very well... pack up your tools, then." Deean smiled, a fan of new wrinkles appearing in the corner of his eye. "Your work here is finished. Go to the dormitory, rest and reward yourself for a job well done."

"Yes sir," the boy said, saluting sharply, almost poking himself with the tool.

"And where is your supervisor... Captain whatever his number?" Deean no longer masked evidence of his frustration, or impatience."

"He left me here hours ago, sir."

"Well, goodnight to you then," Deean finished, waving him off.

The Jedi paced to the engineering station, eyeballing the bobbing digital gauges before him... a virtual sea of floating colors on flat screen displays. Then he paced the full span of the room, hoping to find a security troop standing in the dim glow of the instruments. None were to be found.

Mumbling to himself, Deean spun on his heel and lumbered again through the door. Moments later, he made his way through the empty corridors to find Jil'Qun's stateroom, his brown cloak rising and falling in his wake as his boots drummed out an urgent rhythm.

Jil'Qun awoke to a start. "Come in..." he grumpily shouted at the chime.

The door was opened before he could raise his barrel-like chest. Resting on his elbows, he could see the silhouette of Deean in the shadows at the foot of his bed. Jil'Qun strained his eyes to see, but could only squint in the sterile light of the hallway.

"We have to talk," Deean blurted.

"Now?" Jil'Qun grumbled and shook his head. "I just laid down."

"I know. I'm sorry. We need to leave here now."

"Yes, I'm aware of this too. But what's all this energy about?" Jil'Qun rubbed his eyes, still burning from a tearful, neon-railed nightmare about Alderaan. "Do you bring bad tidings? What is this all about, my friend?"

"The Republic is falling apart, Jil'Qun. I mean right now! The contingent of Clone troops sent here to facilitate this operation have thinned considerably with no explanation. Something very weird is going on. I called your friend on the comlink. When Ky-Wan can no longer account for his own men it does not bode well. You know what a control freak he is."

"Deean. You and my padawan... er... I mean Jedi Ky-Wan. Your pessimism is becoming an unfortunate new personality trait. Gone is the bright eyed young lad I met so long ago..."

"The ship's power, fuel and food stores are all filled to capacity," Deean interrupted. "We

could lift off before the morning... if..."

"...If I give the order."

"That's right, Jil'Qun. You must give the order. We need to leave here without further notice."

"IN THE MORNING? Have you lost your mind? What about the students? Most are gone to war. You know as well as I, we must wait for their return."

"Could be risky. I say, whoever happens to be onboard when we rocket out of here gets to go with us. If they happen to miss the flight, then it's just too bad. We *must* leave without giving too much advanced notice. That's my opinion." Deean crossed his arms defensively.

"What about our *raison d'etre* - the Jedi Archives?"

"All loaded and ready to go."

Jil'Qun became reflective. His eyes focused upon his own feet... two tents at the foot of his bed. "Well, aren't you the overambitious first mate?"

"I am sickened by this, Jil'Qun. Our way of life is finished. All the good times, all the laughter, all the friendship... The Jedi Academy... it's over. Forever."

Jil-Qun stared at his old friend.

The once-jovial Jedi Kett was now laden with concerns Jil-Qun thought only he could be guilty of. His old friend paced the narrow confines of his quarters like a predator trapped in a cage.

The old Jedi wriggled in his sleeping arrangement... wondering if his could bare having his boots on again after only recently doffing them. He scratched his head... feeling the thinness of his scalp.

"Deean, you know... I've been thinking about all this business of our way of life changing..." He offered in a comforting tone.

Deean stopped in his tracks and glared at the rounded old Jedi.

Jil-Qun focused on his feet again and continued.

"...What I mean is... "

"... so much of what we live for comes from the Force. I mean, life, beauty, compassion... these ideals can most certainly exist outside the confines of a political construct. I mean..."

Peace and Justice are universal social goals. Surely you have considered our duty to fight for a just cause..."

"... may not require Yoda's constant guidance?" The old Jedi smiled thinly.

Deean was not amused.

The highly educated Jedi folded his arms in his enormous sleeves, at once looking noble and officious. Yet, for some reason, he went back to pacing the floor like a caged predator.

Jil-Qun had never seen Deean so overwrought with apprehension.

The old Jedi struggled to make a useful comment... feeling it was the least he could do after Deean had talked him down from the ceiling so many times before. But convincing Deean that losing their entire way of life was "OK" seemed like a difficult sell. Even to Jil-Qun.

He scratched his beard as he pondered what might be the right phrase to comfort his worried friend.

Another bell chimed from somewhere in the room.

"What now..." Jil-Qun moaned. His face changed as his irritability came out. "Come in!" He almost shouted at the door.

"Jil-Qun, everybody who is going is under orders to be on board within one hour's notice, sir. All you need to do now is speak to Kywan and get the clone troopers on board and we can get moving." Jundal finished speaking as he came to a stop next to Deean. "Master Kett." He said, nodding to the older man.

"Does everyone here know what's going on but me?" Moaned Jil-Qun, getting off his sleep pad. Pulling on his robes, he looked blearily at the two men standing in his sleeping quarters.

"Deean, I know I have to give the word to pull out soon, but I'm not sure if the time is right yet. It doesn't feel right. On top of that, how are we going to let all of the absent students know where we are, and when we will be leaving? Even if they know when we left, they won't know where we've gone. What of them?"

"Master Jil-Qun, If we left clues for them to follow, someone else may decipher them. Sith, bounty hunters, anyone. We all know of the growing trend of anti-Jedi sentiment running through the galaxy at the moment, so it may not be a good idea to drop hints of where we are. All of the absent Jedi are capable people, so I don't see any need to try and baby them through this. Anyone wanting to know where we are can speak to Master Yoda at the Coruscanti temple. He will be able to tell anyone who needs to know where

we are. The only person i can recommend contacting is Master Peleb, as he may be of use to the ship Bourne Jedi. He is one of the most organized people i know, and a good man to boot."

Jil-Qun stared out of the window lost in thought. It was all changing so fast. When the idea had first been broached, and the decision made, it had seemed exciting, thrilling even. Now it was underway, Jil-Qun was almost drowning in a sea of paperwork and calculating manpower and timing schedules. His padawan was off with the clone troopers doing a job he would have thought more suited for himself, and he felt like nothing more than a glorified time keeper. In the past, he had always been a Jedi of action, one suited to 'aggressive negotiations' as he liked to call them, not to sitting behind desks and organizing loading schedules. The entire thing was a logistical nightmare. But at least it was nearly over.

"Jun, is there actually anyone wishing to stay?" Jil-Qun knew a couple of the older students had expressed the wish to stay at some earlier time, and their had been some talk of leaving behind a small group among the padawans.

"No. There have been words exchanged to the effect of 'The council has given the order to evacuate. Therefore we evacuate, unless you wish to face master Yoda and explain to him why you have gone against the express wishes of the council' and they seemed to clear the wish to stay out of anyone's minds. All of the support staff are ready, and have loaded up their belongings. They have all been assigned quarters and their possessions have been moved over."

"Good. And we're ready to go? Loading is finished, or should be by now, supplies are on board. All that needs to happen, is my giving the word. It's a big word though."

Deean put his hand on the older mans shoulder. "I know it is, Jil-Qun. We all do. But it needs to be said. When all is said and done all we are waiting for now, is you." Deean's voice dropped to almost a whisper. "I know its difficult, But we need to go. At the end of the day, its not the place, old friend. It's the people you take care of, and who take care of you. It's time to go."

The old Jedi looked around his quarters then back at the impatient Jedi before him.

It was a mess... as usual. How could a being sworn to dispossessing himself of material items... be so encumbered with material items? Datapads strewn about, robes tossed on the floor, boots laying at opposite ends of the room.

The old Jedi sighed, perhaps he was a bit behind on a few things. Uprooting himself from the Academy had been a somewhat messy procedure. He wasn't really sure what was in half the boxes that laid in the corner... but he knew it was all terribly vital and could not be abandoned.

"Oh all right, let's start some crosschecks on the main bridge in an hour... sleep can wait.

We might as well load test the main repulsors, see if we can handle the added weight in our botanical experiment".

The two Jedi nodded in and bowed in the formal manner passed on to them from generations of Jedi to one and other.

"Now... get lost so I can wash my feet and slip into my damn boots ... again" he muttered gruffly.

The younger Knights naturally pardoned the old Jedi as he artlessly shoved them out his cabin door.

"He cares too much." Deean said, looking down the corridor in the direction he was about to walk to make his preparations.

"Excuse me?"

"Thats his problem. He sees every young Jedi that walks out of here as one of his children, one of the many who cannot do without him. You have, beside Master Peleb, managed to teach a lot of them to look after themselves. In fact you've managed to teach a lot of them what it is to be warriors, and good ones too. Jil'Qun has taught them how to think like Jedi. To feel it. To *be* it. Most of them look up to someone like him and think 'I want to be like him. I wish i was...' yet they don't realize that by doing the duty, they are like him. As you said, they are all capable people."

Deean sighed. It was another thing he did not need to sit and brood upon. Yet, as usual, he worried about the old man. He was important to him. Nodding to Jundal he made his good byes and walked away from the younger Jedi. Shaking his head slightly, Jundal smiled softly to himself, watching the mans back as he walked away. Deean was one of the ones he had never understood. An enigma, so to speak. That man was one of the most intelligent men he had ever met, and he seemed to speak forth the wisdom of the ancients like it was common sense. Maybe his mind worked differently to Jundals, maybe it didn't. Jundal just didn't know. But whatever it was, Jundal would happily give someone else's eye teeth for the secret. Chuckling a little, Jundal walked toward the docking bay where the white prophet was docked for a change of clothes.

"Saraphan, change to poor done stand bye mode. I'm going to be on the main ship for a while. If you have any problems, speak through my communicator, and if you feel that you are in any danger more serious than a mechanic having a go at your gravitic converters, eject all living matter on board not on the stock manifesto, and seal yourself up as tight as you like, shields on full. Understand me? "

"Yes Jedi Desh."

"Quit calling me that. And should i need you, ill call you. Got me?"

Saraphan went quiet for a moment.

"What if i need you?" It asked in a decidedly feminine voice.

"What you need me for? And you can stop with the apparent emotional manipulation you're trying there. You are a ship, not a woman. An artificial intelligence programmed into a set of microchips and gel packs used in the construction of this ship. You are the voice i gave a name

to."

"What if i need you?" Saraphan repeated in a small voice. If it had had eyebrows, it would have fluttered them.

Jundals face changed slightly. He had got sick of it.

"Then whistle. Quietly. About four decibels. I should hear that and come running. Now. I have a meeting I have to be in, with both Master Kett and Master Jil'Qun. I will be there if anything important happens, like the universe imploding spontaneously. Which, I might add, if it does happen, I would know about as soon as you did. Understand?"

"Yes Jedi Desh."

With a swish of his clothing, Jundal walked off the ship, with a few ideas in his head as to where they were all going.

"They're going to blow it up! That's what I think!"

Deean swallowed, then leaned upon his wrists. The aluminum table creaked. It had been several hours since they woke Jil'Qun from his hibernation, and the sun was casting golden columns of light into the command area of the ship.

"Are you sure?" Jundal asked Deean incredulously. "What makes you think so?"

Jil'Qun was not as accepting. "Deean, I think you've been sleep deprived! This is all too much, my friend."

"It's the only explanation for the sudden disappearance of the clone garrison. Deean turned abruptly... and paced across the bridge. "Try to find one troop on this barge! It's just us. Oh, I don't know anymore. I don't seem to know anything anymore."

He stopped at the window and looked across the vast lands of the former Jedi Academy and beyond. Several of the heavy troop ships had left, and what troops remained gathered on the morning dew - tiny white specks on a field of green.

Deean continued, driving his fingers into his palms. "I don't feel right about this. I feel sick inside. We've had clone troops on and off this ship for weeks, most of them unsupervised. Who's to say that there isn't a thermal detonator under the captains chair right now?"

"That's preposterous!" Jil'Qun barked in disbelief. Then he timidly looked beneath his swiveling chair.

Deean wasn't sure if Jil'Qun was trying to be funny, or if his tirade was beginning to have effect. Looking at the grizzled Jedi, he added, his hands dropping to his hips, "Is it so preposterous? Get all the Jedi in one place and blow them to smithereens!?! I want to hear Ky-Wan's perspective on this."

Jil-Qun closed his eyes for a moment... then slowly smiled.

"Of course, dear... a fine idea" Jil-Qun said softly.

It was unimaginably beautiful this morning, despite Deean's unbelievably grim appraisal had been. The golden shafts of early summer light lanced into the large windowed room. Various Holo-displays and readouts only added to the delicate symphony of the ship's *decidedly* elegant, clean-lined bridge.

"Indeed... damn the bomb under my seat... I'm going to enjoy it while it lasts" Jil-Qun announced as he thumbed switch thus converting a segment of his command dais into a small table. Such amusingly perfect contrivances were found all over the ship and Jil-Qun loved them.

Deean and Jundal each took up a spot on the ring of tufted seating that encircled the command chair... the designers had apparently considered Jedi would "fly by committee".

Fiona smiled and set the tea on the table section and arranged a simple but ample service. Serving each Jedi in a serene manner, her poise was impressive.

Graceful simplicity. As a good tea should be.

Jil-Qun bowed his head to the cup as he took hold of it... and reverently savored the first sip. The other Jedi did the same... each honoring Fiona's service with a degree of reverence.

Jil-Qun began speaking again only after each had experienced a quiet moment with the simple beverage.

"Master Deean... I see your point plainly. Though I suspect the Troopers are nearly engaged in some policing duty or another, I do sense something... peculiar... about this vessel" The old Jedi offered.

"It's all too damn perfect" Jundal offered

"It's all a bit too perfect for me as well... old friends" the senior Jedi said with a sheepish grin.

He gestured to the enormous ship surrounding them "Can you believe they would turn over such a fine ship... to Me??"

Jundal laughed.

"No my friend, if they gave you an old ship, you'd only break it..."

Rising to his feet after he had finished his tea, he stepped over to one of the consoles to the left hand side of the bridge.

"The fire control seems to be a bit tasty. Laser cannons, tractor beam projectors, ion cannons, a warmongers dream, this ship is. But of course, it will only be used in self defense, wont it Jil'Qun?" the last words were said with a big grin on his face.

Sitting down, he turned to the two older men.

"So, structure of command, gentlemen. Being pretty much the only three qualified Jedi here, I'm gonna vote for Jil'Qun as captain of the good ship Freeflight, Deean as the second mate, and me as the general lazy skiver. What do you say?"

Both of the other men laughed at the proposition.

"Well, we have a lot to do, my friends." Replied Jil'Qun. "Jundal, get thee to the desk in the quarters i have assigned you, and start writing out timetables for the student on combat, theory of combat and history of combat. I'll leave the entire syllabus up to you, but for some of the younger ones try not to make it too bloodthirsty for them. We'll give them a few days to get settled in, and then classes will start as normal. For now Deean, theory and use of the force, you know the job, I'd appreciate it if you can run those classes for as long as you can, unless the council on Coruscant calls you away. Once you've done that, get back to me. We don't have anything that needs doing here right now, So I'll oversee the final preparations for start up of the main engines. Gentlemen, i do believe we're ready to go."

All three men looked eager to get started, and as they all started walking toward the entrance to the bridge, Jundal looked to the others.

"Jil'Qun, what the name of this big boat, anyway?"

The old Jedi slowed and his face became somber.

He paused a moment by the steps to the lift... turning his gaze to the commanding view just to one side of them, the old Academy grounds could be seen below... in silent, empty splendor, not a light on nor window stirring... the broad edge of the ship they stood inside could be seen as well.

"My brothers..." Jil-Qun said softly.

"In light of our wilting galactic status... I have chosen to call this ship, which will carry us away from the life which we have lived and into an uncertain future... *'The Forsaken'*"

The other two Jedi let the name rest on the air a moment, then nodded in silence.

For they all were now, indeed... Forsaken Jedi.

Deean returned to the bridge, bowed at the waist, and receiving a cup of tea from Fiona. He realized that of all the people in the room, he needed it the most.

"Thank you, my lady," he breathed, winking.

Jedi Fiona always talked about how much Deean had done for her, when really it was the other way around. He buried his nose in the tea and centered himself. In times like these Fiona reminded him to be the best man he could be. Smiling, he looked up and touched her cheek with the back of his hand.

"It's a strange thing to be out of work," Deean said at last, setting the saucer on a console and heaving himself into the seat next to Jil'Qun. "We need to focus now on the task ahead. If we all get blown up in a terrorist attack, then so be it. It is the will of the Force," he said, his fingers fanning out like the wings of a bird. "*My* soul will be at peace."

Jil-Qun's face broke into a grin.

"I also concede that there is no point rushing things," Deean said, running his hand through his hair. "Since we will be gone for a long, long time we might as well make sure we are thorough in our preparation... but we should be on our guard."

Jundal nodded in agreement. "So when are we leaving, boss?" he voiced.

"Soon," came Jil-Qun's reply. He looked as if in a trance, his thoughts a tangled morass.

Deean's cast his eyes at Jundal, who deflected the gaze toward their commander.

"HOW soon?" asked Jundal, pouring hot water onto bundle of herbs in his cup.

"Hopefully not before I have time to wish you all well."

Caleigh sat in the doorway to the bridge, her hair tightly braided up, the outline of her saber just barely hinted at next to her boot, underneath her burgundy skirt. Her cloak was belted to her waist, the hood pushed back. She looked each of them in the eye, noting Fiona's confused expression.

"But I thought-" Fiona began. Caleigh shook her head.

"Master Kett, Master Tahm... I regret to inform you that I will not be accompanying you after all."

Jundal turned in his seat.

"I know what I said effected padawans but you are no padawan, Caleigh. You are a Jedi Knight, strong and true as any I have ever met, and I cannot compel you to stay. None of us can. But I will ask you this. Will you come with us? That is all I *can* do. We may need

you along the way... Not the three of us, but of the various sundry and flotsam we pick up along the way. All three of us here can be hard teachers, but we need someone of a soft touch, perhaps someone to mediate the discipline, and inject a little caring. Will you come with us?" At the end of the speech Jundal face wore an expression of mute pleading, one which did not grace his features often.

Caleigh smiled softly, turning more fully toward them as she walked into the bridge, and stood in front of the three men.

"No, I'm afraid I have other commitments. Commitments I would neither wish nor be able to escape. I am needed elsewhere gentlemen. You know as well as I do that when the force calls us we must go. There is no excuse for us not to, but we must make a decision on whether or not to obey the force..."

She paused a moment, and her faced hardened a little, as did her demeanor.

"And the decision is mine, and I have made it."

Jil'Qun relaxed into his chair, his breath sighing out in front of him.

"Then you have made your decision my dear, and it would take a better man than any of us to dissuade you from the path you have chosen. Go with the blessing of your teachers and peers and know that we are proud of you for being able to leave us, but at the same time stay with us."

Caleigh looked confused as Jil'Qun smiled at her expression.

"You will understand in time. But my only advice is to be mindful of the force, and know that you are but an extension of it."

Jil'Qun said the last of this with a small smile knowing that she knew this as well as she did. She was and always would be but an extension of the force, as was he. She would do well should she heed her teachings, and that she would always be a part of the Jedi order. Wether she was with it, or it's authority was with her she acted on its behalf and it acted on hers. But her decision was made. She would walk her own path, one sundered from that of the academy.

"It is not a decision I have entered into lightly..." Caleigh sighed. She was unsure how they would take her reasoning, but she felt it was right. She had meditated on it for a very long time. "There is someone I have been called to, and he to me, though he claims no familiarity with the Force. He maintains and operates the systems for a children's education center out on a small planet in the Outer Rim. I have been doing some work out there.. and I feel I will be of more use continuing it than I will be of here on the ship with you."

She paused, pulling a small datastick from her pouch. "If there is something I can do for

you, this is how to contact me. There are both standard and emergency methods in there, along with a.. special coded figuration. I'm sure you can figure out that one's purpose."

Deean looked at Caleigh and smiled. "I as well know better than to dissuade you." Then the air escaped his lungs, leaving him with a beleaguered countenance. "It breaks my heart, Caleigh... but then I've been prone to sentimentality these days. You will be sorely missed."

"And you," she answered. Then there was a long pause.

"Many would wish for a day in the sun. We have had decades," Deean said at last. He rose from his chair and hugged her. "I am grateful for that... and it is far better to be grateful, than to mourn." Releasing her from his arms he finished. "May the Force be with you, my friend. I have a feeling we may not see one another again in this galaxy."

"Indeed. The Academy is finished. I feel it now as well, Deean" Jil'Qun piped in. "It is a matter of hours before we all face the destructive power of the Darkside... although I'm not quite sure what that means." Then the old Jedi looked around the bridge.

"Who would have thought, in our glory days, that the end would unfold like this? Gone are the students who once came here, laughing and learning on the grass. The Academy's greatest champions are AWOL. "

"Save for the present company," Jundal quipped.

"Well we might as well finish packing," Deean said, gulping the rest of his tea and gently returning the cup to Fiona's tray. He noticed that Fiona had been very quiet throughout the banter. "How about you, Fiona? Are you still onboard?"

"You know am I am, Sir." Fiona said quietly, nodding, then bowing. "I wouldn't leave you for anything in the world." Meeting Jil-Qun's eye, she cracked a shy smile, remembering the incident during the honored Master's time in prison.

"Then we'll finish packing," Deean said, surveying the bridge again. "We leave soon."

This sobering thought left nobody unaffected. Fiona suddenly found the floor very interesting. Deean began to walk to the door, and had pressed the button when she looked back up at her friends:

"Ano, sumimasen..." Fiona started, "Do you think we could hold a wake... you know, before we leave?"

"A wake?" Jundal tilted his head.

"It's a celebration of life." Caleigh told them quietly. "Often used at send offs to celebrate the life that has been-"

"-Instead of mourning the death." Jil-Qun cut in. "But nobody is dead, Fiona."

"I know that." Fiona replied. "It's just... we would be more celebrating our way of life. The Jedi way of life. You see, when we leave, many in our ranks may die. And... we might not get time to mourn. And... it might be nice to, you know, even find time to mourn the end of our life here, and look forward to the future, celebrating the life we have had here." She looked down at the floor again, then met Jil-Qun's eyes, suddenly meek and sad. "It.... was a tradition, back home. I just thought it would be nice."

...

Jundal looked on with a look of gentle pity in his eyes.

"Fiona..."

He walked forward, gently putting his hands on Fiona's shoulders, and catching her downcast eyes.

"My dear, we don't have enough time. We have been told to leave this planet, and that is what we must do. The idea is a good one, one that I would honestly love to do, but..." Jundal shook his head slightly. "We will all be holding a wake in our hearts and minds, a longing for home that will not be slaked for years, but we cannot stay I am afraid."

Jil'Qun strode over, the look of finality in his face, and the way he stood.

"Jundal is right, unfortunately. We cannot have one now, but we may be able to have one in a few months, even a few weeks, when we are away from here. If we had a wake here, we never know what might happen. We leave ourselves open for attack. Even you, gentle one, would have to take up the lightsaber with what skills you have and defend us. And that is simply not something I am willing to put you through. I would not see the innocence die in your eyes, little one."

Fiona could do nothing but hang her head. She knew that this would help the people of the academy to adjust, to leave this old life behind, but if there was no time... A look of resolution came into her eyes.

"Very well Master Tahm, Master Desh. But we will have one when we are underway!"

Everyone in the room smiled slightly at the look of determination on her face.

"Now, how about those repulsors? Lets get this tub checked out and standing ready... Attention all stations: report launch your status on my mark... I want it by the BOOK people!" Jil-Qun barked.

Instantly the room came alive with activity. A few shining protocol droids came from various side entrances and proceeded to run instrument checks... a few of the more

seasoned Jedi pitched in to help. Soon the whole bridge was alive with the sound of verbal and electronic chatter.

Deean and Jundal knew they had jobs to do. Each leapt up and strode to a lift, leaving Fiona and Caleigh alone with Jil-Qun for a while. Then Caleigh wandered over to look at the elaborate NAV array.

Fiona turned to look at the old Jedi whom she had known for so very long now... his enormous eyebrows knit in the usual, furious-looking scowl that he always affected.

Ugh. Such a tyrant he could be... all to cover those bad feelings he hung on to. Oh yes, old Jil-Qun was indeed a rare thing.

A cranky Jedi.

After all, most truly cranky Jedi just leave the order and (at the very least) find outlets for their crankiness. Ex-Jedi were turning up everywhere these days... wearing black and scowling and being very selfish in their pursuits. Fulfilling their destiny and leaving the nicer Jedi in peace.

Not Jil-Qun. He insisted on remaining in an Order where compassion is a central element... and taking it out on everyone else.

A Jedi bully, actually.

Fiona smiled quietly at her little joke to herself... she hardly ever thought like this. Her fellow Dathomirian priests might find it amusing... but she was living as a Jedi these days. Maybe she was tired?

Just then... the old scoundrel caught her snickering at him. Fiona smiled softly as held her gaze long enough to see the old Reek wink at her.... then return to his careful scowl.

Damn him... he had read her thoughts.

Deean stood in the shadows, taking respite in the mental play-by-play. After all, he was close to both of his friends. But what bothered him at this time were his *own* thoughts.

"What if the Separatists were right?"

Never before did times demand more certainty of a Jedi... and never had things been less certain.

One thing was for sure. Something very bad was about to happen.

Jedi Poetry

Internal Epiphany

Sometimes I feel like
a storm-chaser, following
an anger long resigned.
Having issues without reason,
Causing stirs
To Justify my mind.
I change - I change,
I stay the same...
Crashing thunder where I go.

Let go your righteous indignations,
Try for once to just be free.
Remove your expectations -
Let yourself simply be.

The Path Less Traveled

The heart drew me here when all had been lost
Those words burned my soul - faith failed my life's cause.
Self-concept now gone - rage came at what cost?
Broken, I wept 'til my tears gave me pause -
Not dark, nor light, I won't live in a cast.
Searching and scouring through all that was naught
Was "I" who was then now part of the past?
The shadow will beckon to what it has wrought...
What can I say? My soul found a new life -
All had been vague - it is now what I know.
Out of the ash, I've emerged from the strife.
I am who I am - who I was, she did go.
You may not know why I feel I must stay,
But then again, that's the way of the grey.

Believe This

Believe this.

Believe that every second spent following this code is a second not spent leading your own life.

Believe that every second spent contemplating this code is a minute not spent acting.

Believe that you cannot dismiss every conceivable situation with a convenient quotation from this code.

Believe that every situation deserves individual calculation and contemplation, and

Believe that this code cannot help you.

Believe that that this code is indecipherable.

Believe that living by this code is conforming with this code.

Believe that every dogmatic word of this code is a chain around your neck.

Believe that this code says you should do what I think is right, not what you think is right.

Believe that to challenge this code will mark you out as a dissident and your prospects for advancement will be automatically reassessed.

Believe that once you accept this code, you will be just like all the other people who accept this code.

Believe that learning this by heart means that you can recite it without thinking of its damaging implications.

Believe that there is nothing to believe here.

Believe that there is nothing to see here.

Move along.

Untitled

There is a power greater than all human comprehension.

There is never a time that It does not exist;

Never a place beyond its reach;

Never a person separated from it.

We have called It by many names,

Yet none have sufficed.

We can call it Joy and Love.

We can call it Unity.

We can call it Freedom.

It is all these things,

Yet it is none of these.

The symbols distract from the truth.

The image distracts from that which has none.

One cannot point to It, for in so doing,

The rest would be rejected.

It cannot be sought out,

For it is already there with us.

No practice is required,
For there is nothing we lack.

It is everywhere.
It is everything.
All thoughts, all words, and all actions.
It is inescapable.
It is the Source of all things.
It is the Path on which we walk.
It is Life Force that sustains us.

There is no contradiction.

II

At the onset, there is only vagueness.
Learning must begin with ignorance.
Remembrance springs forth once all is forgotten.
Life comes after death.
Being unprepared is inevitable,
So don't strive for readiness,
Or readiness will flee from you.

The path takes many turns,
Ascending and descending as well.

The leaf flows with the stream.
Push it, and it will sink.
Let it be, and it will travel further.
It may sink on its own,
But it is free.

You may travel through mountains and deserts,
Through forests and plains,
And never be able to find it.
That is because it was always with you.

III

Having a guide on the path does not decrease the distance,
Nor does it make the travel easier.
All that results is greater simplicity.

In order for the lake to be renewed,
It must use streams to empty itself.
At the same time it must receive more from others.
Thus, it is always whole, yet ever changing.

Savor the period of growth.
For in a life that is ever growing,
You will savor every moment of your existence.

Random coincidence does not exist.
What occurs, is meant to occur,
Yet there is no plan.
However, life is your creation.

A plan of no plan:
The meaning of life
Is to have no meaning at all.

This is the paradox of the universe.

IV

How utterly infinite the universe,
Though it lies unseen as such.
Thus it is only so when realized to be so.

Through the totality of creation,
We inevitably begin to wonder
How do our worries and dreams
Have any meaning whatsoever?

Infinite Expansion and Infinite Contraction
Converges in the middle.
The middle is the Source of all things.

Realize infinity of the universe
And you will realize infinity of the mind.
Realize infinity of the mind
And you will realize infinity of the spirit.

Thus there are no limits. Ever.

V

Nothing matters.

All is void,
Until one enters the void
To create that which matters.

Thus the great choice is presented:
Limitation or Liberation?
What is Limitation?
It is striving.
What is Liberation?
It is pure joy in every action and inaction.

One will imprison,
One will release.
Thus, all will decide.

VI

Open up.
Do not run away,
Let go.
When you are ready, it will come.

Everyone has doubts.
It is in our nature to doubt that which we do not understand.
And thus to fear.

Before you can change,
Realize the present.
Having done so,
You may recognize the change.

Solace lies within the moment.
Realize the present moment,
And there will be nothing else to plague you.

VII

External artistic creation
Springs from inner existence.
The artist lets the soul come forth.
It is the connection:
The gateway between the totality and the physical world.

Without complete freedom in art, there is no art.
With unhindered movement, dreams can become reality.

So free yourself!

From guilt.
From doubt.
And all that exists within you
Will be made manifest.

Thus the paradox:
Be free from needing freedom,
And it will be yours.

VIII

Truth is that which cannot be seen with the eyes,
Heard with the ears,
Or touched by the hand.

Our destiny is not prewritten.
We are responsible for the future.
True destiny is what we create.

Focusing on the negative is easy, but complicated.
The positive is difficult, but simple.

We are a part of nature,
Yet most have forgotten.
The wise will remember this.

IX

A good artist is always improving one's work.
The process is never-ending,
Thus there is always growth.

Good implies evil.
Ease implies difficulty.
Soft implies hard.
Let go of both sides, and things are done simply.

Why are most conflicts settled by violence?
Why is violence a universal language?
Because loss is rarely forgotten.
Give up everything,
And you will have everything.

Most of us cannot say we don't complain...
That we don't desire.
I'm no more innocent than the rest.

X

Look around you.
What do you see?
What do you know is real?
Can you tell?

Let go of the room you are in.
Let go of the things around you.
Let go of the building you are in.
Let go of the things outside...
And float comfortably.

XI

Where are you going?
What are you doing?
Who are you?
Who will you be?

These questions are meaningless.
Be nothing and everything at once.
Do nothing and everything at once.
Go nowhere, and thus everywhere.

Every moment is a reincarnation.

XII

There is nothing to say,
Yet silence is unnecessary.

Having no meaning or purpose,
Depression may result.
Yet one may realize that with nothing in one's way,
What is there one cannot do?

Death is life and life is death.
Acknowledge this with every moment of your life,
And the contradictions will cease to exist.

Limitation and Liberation are one in the same!

Serf

Nothing left to believe in except cynicism.
Nothing left to cling to except skepticism.
Nothing left to fight for except apathy.
Nothing left to inspire except a sense of lottery longing and the TV soap cliffhanger.

No need for apartheid and ghettos today; their consensus is one of shared identity.
You can tell from collective uniforms, shared symbols of belonging, shared music, shared style, shared culture, shared tastes, shared opinions, shared view, all collectively and cheerfully bland so as not to cause offence or make anyone feel in any way deviant.

Highly convenient uniform, a bit like drive-thru MacDonald's.
Or microwaves.
Or the second family car.
You can leave your individuality hanging in a wardrobe with your Sunday best to be brought out on special occasions.
Like funerals.

Not slave;
Not with your union representation and generous stakeholder pension.
Not slave;
You have the right to choose not to exercise your freedom of expression.
Not slave;
What slave cheerily claps on his chains after the 9 to 5 for an evening out?
Not slave, but serf.
Ploughing the same furrow day after day because There Is No Alternative, thankful for your blinkers which stop you being confused by other furrows.
No job for life today.
But at least you have the security of a role for life.

Serf.
Labeled, compartmentalized, instructed, assigned, consigned, satisfied, dead.
Serf.

The Individual's Void

New age/spiritual authors speak of the individual's void in life experience. A spiritual void that society fills (inappropriately) with consumer goods. Commercials and media convince us that "we need" this or that. We must have the bigger, faster, sleeker, more expensive. it's implied that we'll be happier by having more "stuff." And, with the "wink" technique used in advertising, we buy what's new and hot while we proclaim, "He who dies with the most toys still dies."

These thoughts on a desire to possess came while playing the piano. I was playing "God Help the Outcasts" from Disney's Hunchback of Notre Dame musical score. Esmeralda (in the film) sings to a statue of the Virgin Mary while the parishioners accompany her:

Parishioners:

**I ask for wealth,
I ask for fame.
I ask for glory to shine on my name.**

**I ask for love,
I can possess!
I ask for God and his angels,
To bless me!**

Esmeralda:

**I ask for nothing,
I can get by, but
I know so many,
Less lucky than I.**

**God help the outcasts,
The poor and downtrodden
I thought we all were
The children of God.**

The movie is set in the 15th century which could suggest that the value on material possessions was already rooted in who we are. Or, the filmmakers were slipping moral messages about our lives into the piece for our own self-reflection. The lyrics do raise valid questions about how and what we wish, pray or ask for. The lyrics suggest we devote our spiritual energy and being to the possession of objects and people. Only Esmeralda applies prayer toward the good of others. Her life isn't ideal, yet she sings, "I ask for nothing / I can get by."

Outside the realm of entertainment media, the Tao Te Ching Chapter 44 (S. Mitchell translation) signifies on this passion for cash flow and other goods as lacking replacements for serenity and spiritual wholeness:

**Fame or integrity: which is more important?
Money or happiness: which is more valuable?
Success or failure: which is more destructive?**

**If you look to others for fulfillment,
You will never truly be fulfilled.
If your happiness depends on money,
You will never be happy with yourself.**

**Be content with what you have;
Rejoice in the way things are.
When you realize there is nothing lacking,
The whole world belongs to you.**

(Without digressing too far, it's worth noting that Lao-Tzu was writing his views in "B.C." time, so perhaps the idea of possessing is not an advertising corporate creation

after all! But that is, I'm afraid, another lecture.) The first stanza's questions lead us to reflect on what is really important and/or a necessity in life. Individual questions to answer - Lao-Tzu presents his viewpoint and guidance for life in the latter stanzas.

Christ, the Buddha, and other religious, philosophical and spiritual sages call for mankind to lay claim to spiritual causes, to give up money and possessions freely, to work for the good of fellow man. not hoard material possessions. Quoting many sources - or even reading this piece I've written on the topic - would serve pointless if the individual does not or cannot find his own truth in the respective spiritual progression.

The Jedi Code is perhaps a simplified amalgamation of the ideas presented in theological and philosophical documents. Though rooted in its own fiction and mythology of Star Wars, the truth of a line like, "There is no passion ~ there is serenity" reflects the wisdom of previous scholars and speakers. But. then what? What is the objective or purpose in learning not to cling to our possessions. and. not to possess at all? Lao-Tzu says its happiness. Christian interpretations often lean toward one earning a place (or better place) in Heaven. Freely giving up goods in Buddhism suggests better karma for successive lives moving toward Nirvana. In "this" lifetime, setting aside one's ego, training for a lack of desire. we are open to spiritual growth and (perhaps more importantly) open to helping others, when appropriate. Granted, in this, there's an internal benefit to selfless behavior - that is the paradox of existence. I believe there is some oft quoted line that goes, "What goes around, comes around" meaning that if you do good, good will come toward you. The reward is inevitable.

Writers, going from Emerson and Thoreau in the 19th century, to Millman and Redfield today, suggest that man's potential is unlimited and that we, as society, are just beginning to realize our purpose and (un)limited potential. Even though concepts have been covered for thousands of years, we are just beginning to see. Perhaps, as Jedi, we are at the spiritual forefront of this progression.

The Death at Heavensgate

Dark, deadly, commencing, approaching you in silence...
Scaring, opposing, attacking and defending...
The hunter of the prey, the stalker of the shadows...
The ultimate consumption of intoxicating fear...
The root of your emotion...
The pale white light...
The fearful shadowy darkness...
Combined in one creature....

Hear my cries, and hear my call...
See your errors, and know your faults.

Learn what you desire to do...
Learn but be aware of the other side of knowledge...

Learn comprehensive lessons that may advance with your inner self to become one...
One of them...
One of us...
One of mine...
I am the one, the lonesome one...
I am the only one who is the one...
I will hunt you if you do betray me...
And will never leave you alone...
And will create your destiny...
And will annihilate the cause... if I desire to do so...
Pray to me...

Lesson to the Dark Side

Never break a fall.
If you are prepared to break a fall, you are prepared for the fall itself.
Sith do not fall. They do not fail.

There is no pain where strength lies.

Do not underestimate the Jedi.
Even though they have a fatal flaw, they are formidable.

The feelings of the powerless do not matter.
The feelings of those with power can be exploited.

A punishment is a lesson.
Learn it well.

Always remember, anger is a living thing.
Feed it and it will grow.

What is done in secret has great power.

If your enemy inflicts pain, do not allow him to see it.
There is no pain where strength lies.

To draw out your victory is foolish.
Get the killing done. Then Move on.

Explanations are excuses.
Sith don't want excuses. Only results.

Think of the now. Think of the future.
Do not meditate on the past.

Do not neglect old tricks.
They work.

Push your advantage always.

The battle is not over until your opponent is dead.

The Mirror

"Look into the pool, my child
And tell me what you see"
That is what my father then
So long ago said to me.

I gazed into the water deep,
But nothing did I there spy.
"Look closer, look closer
Tell me what meets your eye"

Swiftly did the water change
My breath it took away
I looked then upon myself,
Mirrored within the sparkling waves.

Clone

Crystallize her life, dear friend,
As fine climate clears her mind;
Cleanliness has found a trend
As flamed within jewels you send.

Captivate her love, once kind,
As your mission proves to mend
Contagious clouds; cling and bind,
As her spirit with you find.

The Ritual

My fingers rest calmly in my lap
My legs are in half lotus, and comfortable
My eyes are barely open, yet they see
My back is stretched to its fullest
My tongue is silenced for once

My seating is surrounded by little candles
A bottle of water is not too far away
I will need it when I return
I ready my mind to leave
To where there is no food
No water
No cold
No warmth
No sleep
No anything
Calming myself, I drift inside it...

Inside
I start feeling at one with myself
All my senses are unified into one me
I feel no loneliness
I am at constant peace
My feet feels as if I am sitting on foam
A perfect pillow
Enlightenment is my only illumination
Colors I've never seen are now everywhere
My physical hungers are fed with flashes
The days pass, my thoughts are my only company
They take time to entertain me
Showing me experiences I'd forgotten
Everywhere I meet a new part of me
Like slides my memories
I laugh, but not aloud
I cry, but of joy
I smile, but not with my lips
I am smiling at what I am about to do
What I came here for
My mission
When this is over I will have another part of me
One I must learn to use
Now
Here
Inside
I will build...
The components of my weapon are gathered
I study them
Touch them to know every corner
Understanding them
Enfolding them
My mind moves as invisible hands
Lifting the parts inside my mind

Starting to join the components
I bind them together
I shape their forms
Making them melt together
Molding them into the shape I desire
They mesh together
They function together
Like branches they grow together
The components gather from dozens into one
Forever another part comes to fit its rightful place
And then another comes, and another.
They unify into one
Their numbers decrease
When this is done
The number will only be one
Until the components are one
Until the components is one
Until it is one
Making what was once a gathering of clumsy components
Into something organic, natural
Forever perfecting the weapon with my mind
Leaving behind what is only in the way
My mind cleans the surfaces of it
It removes the unwanted parts
The parts I don't need
It burns what is not needed
Making it perfect
Making it mine, making it me
Making it not an extension of my body
Making it as much a part of me
As any limb I own
I stroke the sides, feeling the metallic sensation
My work is soon over
Soon perfection is in my grasp
Creating it as a symbol of my power
A whole new part of me, a part for too long not discovered
A part I can't exist without
A part I will never abandon
The part that will keep me alive
Whenever dark times arise
Whatever their numbers may be
They will perish again as quickly
At the sight of this part of me
Now I will install my last component into the perfect weapon
It is complete
Still my eyes cannot see it yet

Yet my hands can't feel it
I feel it with my mind, knowing it to be successful
I return to life.

I fall back over, hard
My eyes are blinded by the light
My mouth is as dry as it could be
My clothes are sweaty and drenched cold
My body stinks and aches from the strain
My chest is rising and dropping quickly to catch a breath
I can hardly breathe
My back hurts
A small beard has grown on my chin
I move my one hand over my body to try to wake my senses
I can't feel anything
I am still blind
For a moment I panic
I have been gone for nearly a month
I slowly accept the uncomfortable feeling
Accepting it as a consequence of my mission
The room is cold and outside it is a new season
The candles around have been dead for a long time
The bottle of water has dust on it
The world has worked without me
Forgotten me while I worked
Forever slowly and for some hours my senses return
I can see
I can breathe
I feel my body again
And I feel its new addition
Resting calmly and perfect in the palm of my hand
I smile
I have succeeded...

Breath of the Force

Take a deep breath...
and feel the wind brush past you.
The tree sways in the wind...
as a mother gently rocks her child to sleep.
The river flows on...
as we let go of our regrets.
The sun shines warmly...
as we care for others.
The snow falls quietly...

as we close our eyes
and meditate.

The Calm

Can you touch the sunset?
Bathe in its warmth,
and feel its love?
Can you hear the rain?
What does it say to you?
Can you reach,
reach and touch a cloud
and bring it back down with you?
Can you see the wind?
Let its embrace
carry you away?

It is above you.
It is within you.
Walk to the horizon...

..and leap.

Unity

"Unity is the key," he says
But once opened the door, what lays?
Is this old book, that of spoken unity?
I open the book and at first sight
The information was surprisingly light

The words so simple and clear
Who would have thought it was so near
But as I read on
I see the pages start to turn
And as I come to the end, the burn

A bright blaze of fire
Devours the book as if to say "liar"
But even though the book is gone
The truth remains in my mind
I refuse to fall behind

A understanding takes over
This was no luck like a four leaf clover
This was truth
A truth that was meant to be shared
I shall go to those depths so many have dared

Helping others is in my blood
They already have the wood
Let me help them fuel that wood and give
A spark of understanding
So that they can do their own standing

So that the truth wont die with me
But instead live on and let others see
What that book so simply said
Our souls that soar
Hold the key to that door

It's that courage to find the key
That will eventually lead us to see
What was truly meant to be
That we are all connected
for this is not something that can be elected

Just simply that even our differences
Is not the fences
That keeps unity broken
For deep down inside our heart
Its pure hate that keeps us apart

A hate like that of none other
A hate that would make brother kill brother
Which eventually leads to suffering
Even in suffering, there is a certain unity
Hate, love, a common bond of believability

In the very end we are all the same
There is at least one thing that brings us shame
Those little things that come back to haunt us

Mistakes that can never be erased from the books of man
It is this which brings us unity because of being human.

The Tao of You

Have you ever asked yourself, "What am I doing here?" and never quite got an answer?
Have you ever wondered, "If I really wanted to, could I fly?" and truly believed you knew the answer?
Have you ever read a book and become so inspired that you feel the need to meditate?
Have you ever wanted to climb the tallest mountain and gaze across the entire world?
Have you ever stood in the rain, and felt that it was singing to you?
Have you ever felt the embrace of the sun?
Have you ever swept a floor, and felt cleaner within?
Have you ever felt time stand still?
Have you ever known that you've done this before?
Have you ever felt the urge to create worlds?
Have you ever known your path, and taken it?
Have you ever lied to yourself?
Have you ever pleaded to know the secret to life, and realized the answer had already been given?

Do you know what you are doing here?
Do you know that you can fly?
Do you know that you are inspired?
Do you know you are on the mountain?
Do you know that the rain is singing?
Do you know the sun?
Do you know you are the floor?
Do you know, time matters not?
Do you know you *have* done this?
Do you know you have created worlds?
Do you know you are on your path?
Do you know that you cannot lie anymore?
You have been given the answer. Many times.

Listen to it!

Human Race

Children of the Stars

Born of the Sun

Enchanting life's magic

Incantations all around

Breath in the essence

Breath out the creation

Forever we where

Far and traveled wide

Existence is within us

Humans of the race

Luna Rising

Luna Rising

So bold and enchanting

Above the Earth

Below the stars

The sun is your brother

The people

Your dreamers

Our Golden Truths

Does it matter whether we live or die?

Does it matter whether we do or try?

Does it matter that the world spins round?

Does it matter that our feet are aground?

It matters not in concern, but only in living...

We live once, and we die once,

We do sometimes, and we try sometimes,

The world never stops to turn,
Neither our mind kept up with burden.
We are here in the now and the soon here after
So be it for life, and love within laughter...
The happiness we seek.

Dreams of Dreamers

I initially intended this to be a song, though since I do not understand music that well, I cannot put it into notes - produce a score.

Its meaning is as simple as I could gather, following from one line to the next up until the end, as if only together could it make sense, as a sentence is whole.

Dreamers come and dreamers go
Wind beneath me seek and sew
Seeds of time and seeds of place
Gather here now in our grace
Bring it high, mighty and wide
Forever long and never die
We are thee and thee are us
For never fear of life and thus
Be at peace forever more
With dreams of places in our lore

A breakdown of the Poem: Dreamers come and they go, just as I have, and they, dreamers, beneath me seek and sew their dreams as new beginnings through life set in their own place, gathering in past dreamers grace bringing things higher, mightier and as wide as ever, forever, never-ending. They are as much a part of us as we are of them and being not afraid with their dreams and ours together they may be at peace forever more with yet one more dream within the very history of mankind. What does

that mean? It means once and since there was one single dream, forever would there be an infinite more.

Ode To Life

Near a closed window from which I watch tonight.

I often find myself, gazing out of a closed window,
And I see the trees and flowers blow, with the wind I do not feel.
And yet I know the wind is chilling,
But with the sun it warms one so.

The skies are clear, and noise is gone,
Through this closed window out which I gaze.
And all is peaceful, all is calm
But only through this protective shield.

The world itself, outside this glass,
Is bitter and harsh with every step,
But when you just enjoy the beauty
Your eyes are truly opened.

Through this open window near which I write tonight.

The End

This is the end of Jediism: The Way of the Force. I hope you have enjoyed these stories, meditations, force powers, techniques, and explanations I have compiled from The United Jedi Academy, The United Jedi Order, The Jedi Realist Academy, Forsaken Jedi/Jedi Academy, and The JEDI Academy. Thank You.